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THE

WAR CORRESPONDENCE

OF

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1877–8

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CONTINUED FROM THE FALL OF KARS

TO

THE SIGNATURE OF THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE

WITH A CONNECTING NARRATIVE

FORMING A CONTINUOUS HISTORY OF THE

WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1878

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PREFACE.

THE motives which have led to the republication, in a collected form, of the Correspondence of the *Daily News* descriptive of the War between Russia and Turkey having been already explained, we have only to add that in the present volume the same system is observed as in the former volume of distinguishing the contributions of each correspondent. The collection, which now forms a complete History of the War, comprises the correspondence of Mr. Archibald Forbes, Mr. J. A. MacGahan, Mr. F. D. Millet, Mr. E. Pears, Mr. E. O'Donovan, Mr. J. H. Skinner, Mr. V. Julius, and other correspondents—in all seventeen in number—to each of whose letters a conventional sign has been affixed.

"DAILY NEWS" OFFICE,
May, 1878.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

POSITION OF AFFAIRS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER.

PAGE

Characteristics of the Russian and Turkish Troops.—Aspects of the Investment of Plevna.—General Skobeleff's Camp.—Description of the Country and the Russian Positions.—Russian Food Supplies.—Turkish Prisoners sent into Plevna.—Policy of Osman Pacha.—Prospects of breaking through.—A Panoramic View.—The Doomed Town.—The Russians and their Critics.—Skobeleff's Positions.—The "Wooded Hill."—Skobeleff in the Trenches.—Gorny Dubnik.—Traces of the Fight.—Rashness of the Russian Attacks.—First Battle of the Guards.—A Problem solved.—Naval Operations.—Torpedo Warfare on the Danube and the Black Sea 1

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL GOURKO'S SECOND EXPEDITION.

On the Road.—The Deserted Village of Teliche.—A Brigade of the Guards.—General Gourko's Headquarters at Jablonica.—Objects of the Expedition.—General Rauch's Advance upon Pravca.—Difficulties of the Campaign.—Fighting in the Mountains.—Sufferings of the Russian Troops.—Capture of Pravca.—General Dondeville's Advance.—Further Details of General Rauch's Operations.—The Abandoned Turkish Encampments.—Osikovo.—The Valley of the Mali Isker.—Occupation of Etropol 43

CHAPTER III.

THE "ARMY OF RELIEF."

The Turkish Fugitives in Roumelia.—The Filthy Town of Sofia.—Mehemet Ali recalled from Bosnia to assume the Command of "the Relieving Army."—Effects of the Russian Strategy.—Circassian Outrages in Orkanieh.—General Features of the Balkan Campaign.—Shaldonik Height.—Operations of General Rauch and General Dondeville.—The Turkish Positions.—Mountain Bivouacs.—The Cossack Stations.—Traces of a Struggle.—Mountain Scenery.—Transport and Ambulance Difficulties in the Mountains.—Lamentable Condition of the Wounded.—Bulgarian Girls.—Life in Etropol.—Difference between the Bulgarians North and South of the Balkans.—Summary of General Gourko's

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PAGE

Progress.—Configuration of the Country.—Engagement between the Turks and Forces under Count Schouvaloff.—With Mehemet Ali.—The Fight in the Orkanieh Pass.—Kamarli Pass.—The Bosnians.—Excellence of the Russian Artillery Practice.—Mehemet Ali deprived of his Command.—Alarm at Sofia.—The Stafford House Fund and the Red Crescent Society.—Self-Mutilation among the Turkish Soldiers.—The Turkish Compassionate Fund and Lady Burdett Coutts's Agent.—Rumours at Kamarli of the Fall of Plevna 73

CHAPTER IV.

THE TURKISH DEFENCE OF ERZEROUM.

Erzeroum summoned to Surrender.—Evasive Reply of Mukhtar Pacha.—Anxiety in the City.—Description of the Defences.—Attacks on the Forts.—Capture and Recapture of Fort Azizieh.—Renewed Attacks.—Descriptions of the Troops on the Ramparts.—The Grand Duke Michael and the Turkish Prisoners.—Difficulty of forwarding News.—The "Last Moukhir in Erzeroum."—Another Summons to Surrender.—News from Kars.—The Bashi-Bazouks and the Shopkeepers.—The False News published in Constantinople.—Mukhtar Pacha's Tactics.—Prospects of the Defence of Erzeroum.—A Fugitive from Kars.—Spies within the Town.—Case of Captain Temayeff.—An Interview with Mukhtar Pacha.—Arrival of the Caravan from Persia.—Change of Quarters.—Muhir Ali and his "Black Hats."—Sir Arnold Kemball.—A Levy of "Contributions."—An Armenian Village.—A Visit to the Chief Inhabitant.—Polygot Conversation.—The Village of Illidge.—The Turkish Sick and Wounded 104

CHAPTER V.

THE FALL OF PLEVNA.

The Operations in Bulgaria.—Attacks on the Army of the Lom.—Capture of Elena by Suleiman Pacha.—Recapture by the Russians and Retreat of the Turks.—State of Affairs before Plevna.—Condition of Osman Pacha's Army.—The Situation early in December.—Reports of Prisoners.—Russian Reinforcements.—Osman Pacha's Preparations for a Sortie.—The Night Before.—A Spy.—Abandonment of Turkish Positions.—General Skobeleff's Advance.—A Panorama of the Battle.—The First Circle Broken.—The Grenadiers in Action.—The Sortie Virtually Repulsed.—Renewed Struggles.—Desperate Fighting.—Plevna in the Hands of the Russians.—The White Flag.—Negotiations for a Capitulation.—On the Bridge.—Aspect of the Battlefield.—Interview with Tefik Bey.—Osman Pacha Wounded.—Conference between Ganetsky, Strukoff, and Osman Pacha.—Unconditional Surrender of the Turkish Army.—Arrival of the Grand Duke Nicholas with his Staff.—Entry into Plevna.—Meeting between Osman Pacha, the Grand Duke, and Prince Charles.—Osman Pacha's Place in History.—Appearance of the Turkish Troops.—Osman's Mode of Living.—Inside Plevna.—Tefik Bey and General Skobeleff Dine and Compare Notes.—Traces of the Contest.—Observations on the Policy of the Defence.—Review of Russian Troops on the Battlefield of Plevna by the Emperor, the Grand Duke and Prince Charles.—Departure of Reinforcements for the Army of the Balkans.—Estimate of the Strength, and Account of the Distribution of the Military Forces in European Turkey 134

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CHAPTER VI.

THE PAUSE IN GENERAL GOURKO'S ADVANCE.

PAGE

News from Constantinople.—Proposal to enrol Christian Recruits.—The Gendarmerie Scheme.—The Projected Civic Guard.—Baker Pacha.—Case of the Geshoffs.—Treatment of Bulgarian Prisoners —Want of Horses.—Censorship of the Newspapers.—The Armenian Community.—Regulations proposed by the Greek Patriarch.—Feeling of the Greeks.—The Sultan's Patronage of the Greeks.—The Circular Despatch.—Desire for Peace.—The Servians.—Danube: Accident to the Bridge of Boats.—Advance of General Gourko to Orkanieh.—The Little Village of Lazan.—Superiority of the Turkish Works.—Description of Orkanieh.—An Unexpected Communication.—Rejoicings over the Fall of Plevna.—Curious Craving for Sugar.—Hard Times for the Guard.—The Sutler's Shop.—The Poor "Bratouschka."—Flight of the Turks from Orkanieh.—Positions of the two Armies.—An Arctic Landscape 161

CHAPTER VII.

THE RUSSIANS AND THEIR PRISONERS.

The Czar's arrival in Bucharest.—Public Rejoicings and Illuminations.—Contrast of scenes in Plevna after the Surrender.—Forlorn Condition of the Town.—Painful Scenes.—Abandonment of the Wounded.—Terrible Sufferings.—Narrative of Recent Events in the Town.—Tardy Efforts for Relief.—Horrors of Removal of the Dead and Wounded.—Neglect of Proper Arrangements.—Scenes in the Valley of the Vid.—The Situation on the 17th December.—Forecasts of the War.—Treatment of Prisoners Captured by the Russians.—Another Glance at Plevna.—The Roumanian Soldiers.—Parade of Troops before the Emperor.—Labours of the Red Cross Society.—Dr. Fraser's Ministration.—Habits of the Turkish Officers.—Conversation with Edhem Pacha.—Prisoners on the Way to Fratesti.—An Etape or Hospice.—Privations and Illtreatment of Prisoners on the March.—A little Sister of Mercy.—A Roumanian Barrack.—A more distinguished Prisoner.—Osman Pacha in Captivity.—Return of Prince Charles to Bucharest 188

CHAPTER VIII.

AFFAIRS IN ST. PETERSBURG.

Reception of the Emperor in the Capital.—Public Rejoicings.—Imposing Scene in the Kasan Cathedral.—Centenary of the Birth of Alexander I.—Requiem Service.—Ceremony in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.—Reception and Procession in the Winter Palace.—Opinion in Russia.—Difficulty of obtaining Data.—The Russian Political Organs.—The Censorship.—Loyalty of the People.—Anecdotes of the Recent Ceremonies and Rejoicings.—Popularity of the Czar.—The Russian Police and the People.—A Street Incident.—The Emperor and the Peasant.—Sensitiveness of the Authorities regarding the Transmission of News.—Censorship of Telegrams.—Vexatious Interference.—Russian Excitement regarding News from England.—Review of Troops in St. Petersburg.—The Russian Reserves.—Russian Army System.—Extent of the Drain on the Resources of the Empire.—The Wars with Napoleon.—Difference in the Conditions of the Present Time.—The Financial Question.—Feeling Towards England . . 222

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

CONSTANTINOPLE, THE DANUBE, AND THE BLACK SEA.

PAGE

Effects of the Fall of Plevna on Opinion in Turkey.—Turkish Views of the Situation.—Expectation of English Intervention.—Increased Desire for Peace.—Exhaustion of Turkish Resources.—Unpopularity of the Proposal to Enrol Christians.—Assembling of the Turkish Parliament.—Failure of the New Constitution.—Proceedings of the New Legislature.—Rumoured Recall of Midhat Pacha.—Arrest of Jewish Bankers.—Depreciation of the Turkish Currency.—The Blockade of the Russian Black Sea Ports.—Irregularities in its Enforcement.—Alleged Illegal Arrest of Foreign Vessels.—Rustchuk and Giurgevo.—Condition of the Village of Slobosia.—The Russian Batteries.—Excellence of Turkish Earthworks.—Bombardment of Rustchuk.—Turkish Outposts Frozen.—The Danube Pontoon Bridges.—The Question of Transport and Supplies.—A Thaw.—Affairs in the Crimea.—Naval Operations in the Black Sea.—Capture of a Turkish Troopship.—A Cruise in the *Euxine*.—Odessa.—Carelessness of the Blockading Force . . . 244

CHAPTER X.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ETROPOL BALKANS.

Reinforcements for General Gourko's Army.—Misery of the Turkish Soldiers.—Defective Arrangements of the Russians.—The Battle-field of the Vid.—Forlorn Condition of Bulgarian Towns and Villages.—A Goat-path in the Mountains.—Deep Snow and Severe Temperature.—Valuable Services of the Red Cross Society.—Heroism and Devotion of the Surgeons and Students.—Forward Movement.—Great Number of Sick and Wounded.—Prevalence of Frost-bite.—Superiority of the Turkish System.—Miseries of Life in Orkanieh.—Plan of the Advance.—Amount and Distribution of the Forces.—General Gourko and his Staff.—A Neglected Bridle-path.—General Rauch and his Men.—General Maglovsky.—A Snowstorm.—The Village of Curiak.—The Kuban Cossacks.—Capture of a Transport Train.—Weliaminoff's Column.—The Balkans Crossed.—The Kuban and the Foundling.—Incidents of the Campaign.—Failure of Donderville's Enterprise.—Attack on the Turkish Positions at Taskosen.—General Mirkovitch wounded.—Valour of the Turks.—Capture of Taskose.—Baker Pacha's Despatch.—An Exciting Chase.—Fight at Gorny Bagaroff.—Cost of the Passage of the Balkans. 274

CHAPTER XI.

THE OCCUPATION OF SOFIA.

General Gourko's Congratulations.—The Small Tin Box.—The Craving for Sweets.—Prisoners and Captured Provisions.—The Hospital Tent of the British National Society.—Examination of the Captured Works.—Retrospect of the Movement.—The Turks Completely surprised.—Stripping of the Dead by the Bulgarians.—A Little Plevna.—The Battle Field of Gorny Bugarof.—The Peasants of the Valley.—News from Sofia.—Authority of General Gourko over his Troops.—The Fez and the Hat.—Neglect of the Wounded.—Apathy of the Russians—Lady Strangford's Benevolent Labours.—Entry into Sofia.—Condition

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PAGE

of the Town.—Feeling of the People.—An Old Turk.—Retrospect of Recent Fighting.—Heavy Losses of the Turks.—Intrepidity of General Gourko.—Public Reception of the Victors.—Orderly Conduct of the Russian Soldiers.—Flight of the Turkish Inhabitants.—Attempt by Bashi-Bazouks to Fire the Town.—Occupation of Ichtiman.—Operations of the Servian Army.—Capture of Pirot by General Horvatovitch.—An Ambuscade 304

CHAPTER XII.

THE ADVANCE TO PHILIPPOPOLIS.

View of the Campaign in Roumelia.—General Gourko's Great Achievement.—A Leap in the Dark.—Again on the March.—Prospect of Peace.—A Bivouac in the Snow.—Tactics of the Turkish Retreat on Adrianople.—Unpleasant Position of Fuad Pacha and his Army.—Trajan's Gate.—Capture of 300 Waggons.—In Sight of Philippopolis.—Baker Pacha's Division.—Exhaustion on both Sides.—The Battle near Philippopolis.—More Fighting.—Forlorn State of Philippopolis.—Capture of Forty Krupp Guns.—Suleiman Pacha's Difficulties.—Recapitulation of Three Weeks' Work.—Philippopolis.—Fuller Details of the Recent Operations.—The Departure from Sofia.—A Change of Temperature.—Report of an Armistice.—Condition of Ichtiman.—Retreat of the Turks.—The Fall of Shipka.—Passage through Trajan's Gate.—A Series of Slides.—Strange looking Houses.—A Relief to the Eye.—Burning and Plunder of Tartar Bazardjik.—Multitude of Fugitives.—A Priest's Discovery.—Passage of the River Maritza.—Close Pursuit.—Count Schouvaloff's Movement.—Daring of a Circassian.—A Sharp Engagement.—General Schilden-Schuldner.—Krüdener's Detachment.—General Gourko's Order.—Adventures of Captain Bourago and his Little Band in Quest of Lodgings.—Entry into Philippopolis.—Condition of Affairs in the City.—Scene at the Ford.—Prince Tzereteleff.—Relief for the Suffering.—Beyond the City.—The Turks at Bay.—Three Days of Fighting.—Homeric Heroism.—Precipitate Flight.—Break Up of the Turkish Army . . 335

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ADVANCE OF RADETSKY AND SKOBELEFF.

The Work of Twenty Days.—Kezanlik.—Arrival of Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha.—A Diplomatic Contest.—How Skobeleff and Gourko obtained Supplies.—Crowded State of the Shipka Pass.—The Capital of the Rose Country.—Movements of Skobeleff and Radetsky.—Plan and Objects of the Combined Operations.—Turkish Movements before the Fall of Shipka.—Number and Disposition of the Turkish Forces.—Effects of the Turkish Disaster at Shipka.—An Exciting Chase.—Hot Pursuit of the Remnant of Suleiman Pacha's Army.—A Severe Battle.—Heavy Losses of Russians and Turks.—Desperate Personal Encounters.—Route of Suleiman's Army.—The Three Heroes of the Campaign.—Distribution and Numbers of the Russian Forces.—Interview between the Grand Duke and Server and Namyk Pachas.—The Armistice Negotiations.—Anniversary of the Refusal of the Protocol by the Turks.—Occupation of Adrianople.—Skobeleff's Iron Discipline.—Flight of the Mussulman Population.—Arrival of Gourko in Advance of his Column 367

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CHAPTER XIV.

FINAL STAGE OF GENERAL GOURKO'S MARCH.

PAGE

The great Exodus Southward.—The Panic Stricken Mussulmans.—Departure from Philippopolis.—Harrowing Scenes on the Road.—Pillage of the Turks by the Bulgarians.—Fugitives from Plevna.—Five Months on the Road.—The Avenue of Death and Desolation.—Hermanli.—Desperate Resistance of Turks at Derbent.—Skobeleff's Cavalry in the Valley of the Maritsa.—Scenes in Adrianople.—A Field for Philanthropy.—Turkish Hopes of English Intervention.—The English Colony in Constantinople.—Traditions of lavish Expenditure during the Crimean War.—Current of Opinion among the English Residents.—Sympathies of the Official Class and of Englishmen in the Turkish Service.—Spirit of the English Consuls.—Influence of English Opinion and Sympathies.—The Turks the Dupes of their Friends 383

CHAPTER XV.

THE RUSSIANS IN ADRIANOPLE.

Snow Storm in the Shipka Pass.—The Bulgarian Dogs.—A Child Victim.—The Lesser Balkans.—Eski-Zagra.—Colonel Polivanoff.—A Hospitable Reception.—Ized Bey.—Comfortable Lodgings.—A Luxurious Bath.—Comfort of the Turkish Dwellings.—Adrianople.—Arrival of the Grand Duke Nicholas.—The Peace Negotiation.—The Autonomy of Bulgaria refused by the Turks.—Continued Cruelties towards the Bulgarians.—Horrible Condition of Slivno.—Wholesale Hanging of the Inhabitants by Order of Suleiman Pacha.—Cruelty of Sadyk Bey.—Intercession of the Metropolitan.—Notable Bulgarians sent in Chains to Constantinople.—Exiled to Boli.—Feeling in Constantinople.—Approach of the English Fleet.—Admiral Hornby returns to Besika Bay.—Excitement of the Turks.—Hopes of English Intervention.—False Rumours.—Comments of the *Levant Herald*.—Discontent in Constantinople.—The Greek Refugees.—Ominous Signs.—Enormous Influx of Refugees.—Terrible Distress.—The International Committee. Anxiety of the Ambassadors 399

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAR IN ARMENIA.

Quiet in Erzeroum.—An Alarm.—Unlucky Mistake.—Funeral of an English Surgeon.—Prevalence of Typhoid Fever.—Frost and Snow.—The Garrison of Erzeroum.—Saved by Fate.—Dearness of Provisions.—False News.—A Caravan from Persia.—The Russian Positions.—Capture of Turkish Cavalry.—Sufferings of Troops from Cold.—Scarcity of Firewood.—A Russian Proclamation.—Surroundings of Erzeroum.—Causes of the Russian Inaction.—Difficulties of Transport.—Insufficiency of the Russian Force.—Existence without Fuel.—The British Consul ordered to Quit Erzeroum.—A Wilderness of Driving Snow.—Muhir Ali Wounded.—Departure of Mukhtar Pacha for Constantinople.—Expected Russian Attack.—Mukhtar's Successor.—Erzeroum a huge Hospital.—Alleged Cruelty to Turkish Prisoners at Kars.—Illidge.—Mehemet Pacha.—Cavalry Demonstrations.—Hopelessness

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PAGE

of the Defence.—A Lapland-like Scene.—Chased out by the Cossacks.—Evacuation of Illidge.—Edhem Pacha.—Aschkale.—Want of Confidence in Ismail Pacha.—Armenia Abandoned to the Russians.—Sir Arnold Kemball Reconnoitres.—Ascent of Mountain Range.—The Turkish Soldier in Sickness.—Evrek.—The Remnant of a Turkish Army.—The Russians in Possession of the Kop Range.—Suspension of the Postal Service.—The Banner of Omar.—An Explanation.—The Executions at Kars.—Gumuschane.—Erzeroum completely Blocked.—Turkish Policy.—Death of an English Volunteer 420

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION OF THE ASIATIC CAMPAIGN.

The Russians in Kars.—False Reports of Russian Inhumanity.—Absence of General Loris Melikoff.—Orderly Behaviour of the Turks.—Diminution of Typhoid Cases in Kars, and Outbreak of the Fever in Alexandropol.—The Neighbourhood of Erzeroum.—Desperate Position of the Turkish Cause.—Mohammedan Feeling.—Ismail Pacha's Refusal to Recognise the Reported Terms of the Armistice.—Plunder of the Inhabitants.—The Impending Cession of Armenia.—Value of the Province to Russia.—Probable Development of Railway Communication.—Future of Russian Rule in Armenia.—Difficulty of transmitting News.—Death of Mehemet Pacha.—Sketch of his Career.—Character of the Armenians, contrasted with that of the Ottomans.—Village of Hamsi-Keui.—Despair and Misery of the People.—Anecdote of a Wounded Soldier.—Difficulties of the Road.—Trebizond.—Batoum.—Unsuccessful Russian Attack on Batoum.—Telegraphic Communication with Europe Interrupted.—Mukhtar Pacha and the Sheepskin Coats.—Torpedo Exploits of the Russians at Batoum. . . 458

CHAPTER XVIII.

PERIOD OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

Syra.—Anxiety regarding the Peace Conditions.—Orders for Cessation of Hostilities.—The Turkish Chamber.—Debate on Massacres at Bourgas.—At Mukhtar Pacha's Headquarters.—Abandonment of the Turkish Lines of Defence.—Skobeleff's Rapid March.—Difficulties in carrying out the Terms of the Armistice.—Server Pacha's Policy.—Final Evacuation of the Neutral Territory.—The Brink of a Second War.—The English Fleet.—Adrianople.—Helplessness of the Population.—Spirit of Brigandage and Vendetta.—Details of the Evacuation of the City.—Particulars of the Negotiations.—Life in Adrianople.—Habits and Feelings of the Russian Soldiers.—Ill-treatment of English Surgeons by Captain Baranoffsky.—Investigation ordered by the Grand Duke.—The Fortifications of Adrianople.—Affairs in Constantinople.—Telegraphic Communication with Europe interrupted.—No News from Europe.—Russians at Rodosto.—Action of Greece.—Attitude of Austria.—Office of Grand Vizier abolished.—Achmet Vevyk Pacha appointed First Member.—Alarming Number of Armed Irregular Troops in the City.—Street Scenes.—The Stamboulee and the Old-fashioned Turk.—Mr. Palgrave's Theory.—The Gipsy Element.—The Refugees.—Open Sale of Plunder.—The Massacres at Viza and in its Neighbourhood.—Terrible Details.—Entry of the British Fleet into the

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PAGE

Straits and Return to Besika Bay.—Russian Generals in Constantinople.—Turkish Ill-feeling towards England.—Further Scenes in the City.—Englishmen robbed by Pomaks.—The Terms of the Treaty.—The Indemnity.—Dismissal of the Chamber of Deputies.—The Greeks.—Their Claims to Consideration.—Affairs at Gallipoli.—The Defences of the Isthmus.—Faith of the Turks in British Intervention.—Zabet Pacha.—The Russians at Rodosto.—Dearness of Provisions.—Distribution of Bread.—Surrender of Rustchuk to General Todleben.—Condition of the Town.—Departure of General Todleben for Russia . 487

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RISING OF THE GREEKS.

Corfu and the Corfiotes.—England's Obligations.—The Greek Conscription.—Athens.—Riot and Change of Ministry.—The Greek Army on the Frontier.—Insurrection in Thessaly.—Hopes of English Aid.—Dread of the Turkish Fleet.—Position of Syria.—Crete and the Cretans.—The Position of Thessaly.—No Quarter from the Turks.—Epirus.—Public Excitement.—Armyros.—The Insurgent Headquarters.—The Dead Lock.—The Turkish Irregulars.—Their Mode of Warfare.—Sourpi.—The Insurgent Chief, Valenza.—The "Sacred Band" of Thebes.—Cruelties of the Turks.—Hassim Aga.—Outrages by the Turkish Naval Forces.—Nicolaides and his Band of Volunteers.—The Three Chief Centres.—Anxiety regarding Russia.—Chalcis.—Turkish Prisoners at Mintzela.—Return of Volunteer Combatants.—The Mode of Campaigning.—Volunteers bound for Macedonia.—General Soutzo's Force. 544

CHAPTER XX.

THE SIGNING OF THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.

Removal of General Ignatieff and the Russian Diplomatic Chancery to San Stefano.—Fall of Server Pacha.—Results of the Appearance of the English Fleet in the Sea of Marmora.—Tediousness of the Negotiations.—Delay of the Turks.—Refusal of Mukhtar Pacha to abandon the Line of Kujuk Tchekmejeh.—An Exciting Moment.—Peremptory Summons of the Grand Duke.—Skobeleff's Opinion on the Situation.—Mukhtar Pacha yields.—Description of San Stefano.—The Terms of Peace.—The Question of the Straits.—Industrious Circulation of False Reports.—Turkish Vacillation.—Sabdoullah Bey.—General Ignatieff losing Patience.—An Ultimatum.—The Strip of Territory in Bessarabia.—Misunderstanding between Russia and Roumania.—Sinister Rumours.—Standing on a Volcano.—The House by the Seaside.—The Labours of the Russian Secretaries.—The Treaty signed.—The Grand Duke announces the Fact to the Army.—Enthusiasm of the Troops.—The Two Armies Face to Face.—Review by the Grand Duke.—A Solemn Service.—Imposing Scene.—The End of the War . . 569

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR.

NOVEMBER 16, 1877, TO MARCH 3, 1878.

Nov. 16, 1877.

Departure of General Gourko's army from Dolny Dubnik for the Etropol Balkans.

Nov. 19.

Attack on the Russian outposts on the Lower Lom.

Nov. 21.

Capture of Rahova by the Roumanians.

Nov. 23.

Capture of Pravca by the Russians.

Nov. 24.

Capture of Etropol by the Russians.

Nov. 27.

Capture by the Russians of the Ottoman Camp at Khazubani, near Batoum.

Nov. 27.

Great Storm in the Balkans.

Dec. 4.

Capture of Elena by the Turks.

Dec. 7.

Advance of General Gourko's headquarters to Orkanieh.

Dec. 10.

Attempt of Osman Pacha to break through the Russian lines.

Dec. 11.

Surrender of Osman Pacha with his entire army, and occupation of Plevna by the Russians.

Dec. 22.

Arrival of the Emperor in St. Petersburg.

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Dec. 23.

Capture of the Turkish transport vessel *The Mércene* by *The Russia*, Captain Baranoff, near Odessa.

Dec. 24.

Capture of Ak Palanka by the Servians.

Dec. 25.

Forward movement of General Gourko from Orkanieh.

Dec. 27.

Recall of Mukhtar Pacha from Armenia.

Dec. 28.

Capture of Pirot by the Servians.

Dec. 31.

Defeat of the Turks at Taskosen.

Jan. 3, 1878.

Arrival of Mukhtar Pacha in Constantinople.

Jan. 3.

The Turkish Parliament passes Resolution condemning the Executive.

Jan. 4.

Occupation of Sofia by General Gourko.

Jan. 6-7.

Capture of the Trajan Pass and Defeat of the Turks.

Jan. 8.

Capture of Slatitza by Generals Dondeville and Brock.

Jan. 8.

A Council of Ministers in Constantinople come to agreement on conditions of Armistice.

Jan. 8-9.

Capture of the Shipka Pass.

Jan. 9.

Completion of the Russian Investment of Erzeroum.

Jan. 9.

Capture of Shipka by General Skobeleff, and of Kezanlik by Prince Mirsky.

Jan. 10.

Surrender of 32,000 Turkish troops with ninety-three guns and ten colours at Shipka.

Jan. 10.

Surrender of Antivari to the Montenegrins.

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Jan. 11.

Capitulation of Nisch to the Servians.

Jan. 11.

Change of Turkish Ministry.

Jan. 12-13

Bombardment of Eupatoria and Theodosia by the Turkish Ironclad Squadron.

Jan. 13.

General Komaroff carries the heights of Gorchotan, in Armenia.

Jan. 14.

Determination of the Turkish Government to despatch Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha as Negotiators to the headquarters of the Grand Duke Nicholas at Kezanlik.

Jan. 14.

Capture of Tatar Bazardjik and Vejtrenova.

Jan. 15-18.

Continued engagements between General Gourko's army and the Turks under Suleiman Pacha.

Jan. 16.

Occupation of Philippopolis by the Russians.

Jan. 16.

Occupation of Slivno by the Russians.

Jan. 18.

Flight of remnant of the Turkish armies under Suleiman Pacha and Fuad Pacha.

Jan. 19.

Arrival of Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha at Kezanlik.

Jan. 20.

Occupation of Adrianople by the Russians.

Jan. 24.

Resignation of the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies by Lord Carnarvon, on the ground of the intention of the Government to give orders for the entry of the British Fleet into the Dardanelles.

Jan. 25.

The British Fleet under Admiral Hornby enters the Dardanelles, but returns, on instructions received, to Besika Bay.

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Jan. 25.
General Radetsky's corps enters Adrianople.

Jan. 25.
Occupation of Lulé Bergas by the Russians.

Jan. 30.
Repulse of Russian attack on Batoum.

Jan. 31.
Bases of Peace and Armistice Convention signed at Adrianople.

Feb. 1.
Capture of Wrania by the Servians.

Feb. 2.
Occupation of Rodosto by the Russians.

Feb. 3
Formal invitation by Austria to the Great Powers to send representatives to a Congress to be held at Vienna.

Feb. 7.
Raising of the blockade of the Black Sea ports.

Feb. 7.
Withdrawal of Mr. Forster's Amendment on the proposed Vote of Credit for £6,000,000 sterling.

Feb. 13.
Passage of the Dardanelles by the British Fleet.

Feb. 17.
Sudden dismissal of the Turkish Parliament.

Feb. 19
Speech of Prince Bismarck on the Eastern Question in the German Parliament.

Feb. 20.
Rustchuk surrendered to General Todleben.

Feb. 22.
Occupation of Erzeroum by the Russians under the terms of the Armistice.

Feb. 23.
Headquarters of Grand Duke Nicholas removed to San Stefano.

March 3.
Signature of the Treaty of San Stefano.

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THE WAR CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

"DAILY NEWS."

CHAPTER I.

POSITION OF AFFAIRS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER.

Characteristics of the Russian and Turkish Troops.—Aspects of the Investment of Plevna.—General Skobeleff's Camp.—Description of the Country and the Russian Positions.—Russian Food Supplies.—Turkish Prisoners sent into Plevna.—Policy of Osman Pacha.—Prospects of breaking through.—A Panoramic View.—The Doomed Town.—The Russians and their Critics.—Skobeleff's Positions.—The "Wooded Hill."—Skobeleff in the Trenches.—Gorny Dubnik.—Traces of the Fight.—Rashness of the Russian Attacks.—First Battle of the Guards.—A Problem solved.—Naval Operations.—Torpedo Warfare on the Danube and the Black Sea.

THE position of the Russian armies in Bulgaria towards the middle of November was one of confident expectation. General Gourko's vigorous and successful operations had finally deprived Osman Pacha of his last means of communication with the outside world; and some weeks had elapsed since any supplies either of food or ammunition had reached him. How far it would be possible to prolong the defence was still a matter of great uncertainty; sanguine estimates, supported by statements of a purely apocryphal character, had from time to time emanated from Constantinople; on the other hand, experienced observers did not fail to note unmistakable tokens of approaching exhaustion. The ultimate fate of the stronghold which had so unexpectedly proved an insurmountable obstacle to the Russian advance, was at least no longer doubtful, for the

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investment had been for some time complete, and the Russian reinforcements and the systematic organization of their operations, under the ablest of their commanders, had really rendered absolutely hopeless any attempt on the part of Osman Pacha to break through their lines. It was, however, soon manifest that the Russians, independently of the question of the fate of Osman Pacha, were preparing for an advance across the Balkans; for the movements of Suleiman Pacha, who had lately been appointed to the command of the army of Shumla, in the place of Mehemet Ali, had almost ceased to cause any serious anxiety, and the reinforcements that were still constantly arriving continued to augment the already superabundant strength of the Russian forces massed around Plevna. Winter campaigning in European Turkey, in fact, did not appear to present to the Russian generals the grave difficulties which military critics, relying on old-fashioned precedents, had anticipated. The following letter from a correspondent with General Gourko describes the state of affairs and the spirit and characteristics of the armies in the neighbourhood of Plevna and in the positions lately captured from the Turks, who had thus lost their last chance of defending their communications with Sofia by way of Orkanieh :—

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, DOLNY DUBNIK, *November 14th.*—There is something of the listlessness and sluggish action of the Orient even in the investment of Plevna. Both sides are earnest enough, to be sure, but there is little enterprise in the earnestness, for neither Turk nor Russian has in his composition that element of restless activity that characterizes some other nationalities, and which has made other European wars dramas overflowing with incident, action, and startling events. Here stand two large armies. One is surrounded by the other, caught in a trap, blockaded in a narrow little valley and along a few adjacent ridges. The investing army has double the number of troops necessary to keep the positions it occupies, and provisions

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and reinforcements are everywhere in abundance. There is in consequence a great force wasted unless the extra numbers are kept at work, and it is just the easy-going Russian character that can endure the inaction, waste of time and strength that is the inevitable result of the methods of operation they cling to. The siege of Plevna has called out the noblest qualities of the Russian soldier; it has also exposed the weaknesses of many a general who has been up to the time of the struggle there honoured and trusted as a leader.

From the first meeting of Turks and Russians there has been an increasing confidence in the troops that has at last brought the generals to a better appreciation of the value of the men—lesson number one. Lesson number two has been a bitter one; it is that not every shoulder strap indicates the capabilities of the man who wears it, and this lesson has been learned by the last soldier in the ranks. If the operations about Plevna result in the acquisition of a knowledge of the best ways of fighting men as well as feeding and housing them, the campaign will have other important results besides the destruction of Osman's army. But the school is a defective one at the best, because it does not develop the soldier to the extent and in the direction which would be required in a campaign against any other army in Europe. We only learn to the best advantage when we are driven to equal and surpass those with whom we are in competition. The Turk as a soldier is widely different from the Russian, and in many respects far inferior to him. He will not stand the bayonet; he will not attack an earthwork except under peculiar circumstances; but he is by nature a fighting man; he understands the value of protection, and prizes his own life much more than does the common Russian soldier, although they both fight with a religious conviction that makes them foes worthy each other in open combat.

The Turk makes better earthworks than the Russian, first, because the Turkish army is ready to try any new arm, or tactics, or engineering operations that may be presented, and from this willingness to experiment and to assimilate the knowledge of other races and nationalities, reaps much good, with, perhaps, great general loss and disadvantage, and,

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secondly, because the wearer of the fez is never at rest in the face of the enemy until he can hide his head-gear behind a good solid bit which will protect him from bullets. The Russians have much to learn from their enemies in the way of cover, and never will acquire the readiness to hide and protect themselves—a necessity in the face of breechloaders—as long as they have their stolid obstinacy of purpose, which will not bear any modification, and chokes itself in its own conservatism.

To come back to Plevna, the first thing that surprises the visitor is not the extent, the size, the strength of the investing fortifications, but I may say just the reverse, and especially the quiet and easy, happy-go-lucky operations going on to compel Osman to surrender. At only one point of the line is there anything like enterprise, and that is where General Skobeleff is. There it is always lively, and the quiet of the nights is broken by the roar of the musketry and the grunting of the mitrailleuses along his positions far oftener than anywhere else—even one may say that only at that place is there any disturbance at all. The cannon roar all about Plevna at times, often at regular intervals in volleys from batteries on the hills about, and it is easy to see that they fire for the sake of firing, and not in the hope of hastening by one day the surrender of the Turkish army. The Turks rarely respond, because they have not the burden of proving that they are on the watch, and because everybody knows that their ammunition is short. The Roumanians are within fifty or sixty yards of the enemy; the Russians, on Skobeleff's position, are within a hundred and fifty; but there is no reason why the whole line should not take this unpleasant proximity to the Turkish earthworks, and that, too, with slight loss. The recent advance of General Skobeleff has shown how easy it is to straighten and shorten the line, and to bring the pickets within speaking distance of each other, a position that is probably much more harassing to the Turks than to the Russians. If the line were shortened, fewer men would be required to keep it, the enemy would be kept more in hand, he would be obliged to spend more ammunition, to expose the soldiers more, and his position would in every way

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be a more disagreeable one. The Russians have been contented, and still are for the most part contented, with leaving the enemy as they find him, and making their own earthworks the best they may to oppose the Turkish fortifications, without attempting seriously to gain great advantages of ground, which they might easily do by expending the same amount of ammunition that is thrown away daily, and with almost no loss of life.

Human nature is the same the world over. Turks are not any the more vigilant when their lines are in danger than any other men; they are more susceptible to panic than less superstitious and less ignorant people; but every one is more or less frightened when he has the muzzle of hostile muskets pointed at him, ready to fire if he shows himself too long; and the way to act with the Turks is to worry them with just the same devices and enterprises that it is evident would worry and disturb the Russians. For example, a few small Russian mortars would make life in a Turkish trench a perfect torture with the necessity of keeping a constant watch for the explosion of the piece, and then to do the active dodging to get out of reach of the projectile. Now, when the shells from ten score cannons strike a redoubt at once, the Turks quietly retire into their ditches when they see the smoke in the Russian batteries, light their cigarettes while the shells are rattling about the earthworks, and come out again and resume their sports or their occupations when the firing ceases. Drop a few mortar shells about the place, and the effect would be quite different, especially if the mortar were placed at a couple of hundred yards' distance only. A good bombproof would then be none too safe against shells which may roll into the door or burst in the fireplace, or dig a hole in the roof large enough to bury a horse. A few telegraph wires, pitfalls, and abattis would make a rush across the narrow space between the lines impossible, and Plevna would be besieged in dead earnest. As it is, it is not so sure that the Turks are having a very hard time of it. They are used to the shells, for I have seen them never leave off work, or even turn their heads, when a large shrapnell shell whistled over

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them and burst just behind the line. The town of Plevna is not bombarded, and the breastworks and rifle-pits are rarely disturbed; only a few redoubts are the targets for Russian guns, and the more iron is shot into these the stronger they are. Time seems to be of no object whatever either to besieged or besiegers. The former await their fate without impatience, content with keeping about them the flower of the Russian troops, and occupying the attention of the whole army; the latter, sure of their game, prefer to wait and have it fall into their hands rather than to make a continuous effort to seize it. Having followed the advanced line of investment for the greater part of the *enciente*, I am convinced that a little squeezing and elbowing would shorten the siege greatly, and that the glaring mistake of the Russians is that they are no more enterprising and wideawake than their enemy, and the latter, in consequence, never loses his composure. The monotony of a siege is not wearying when either side is burrowing and mining and pressing forward resolutely in different places; but where two armies sit down and contemplate each other across an interval of a mile or more, it becomes at last a bore. Picket-firing, which goes on for weeks without a hit, night disturbances, which are the result of the momentary nervousness of some soldier who was looking over the breastwork, and alarms the whole line to send volleys into the darkness, regular cannonading at almost the same hours daily—all this one gets used to very soon, and there is no longer any excitement in it. But it is in the Sclav nature to either overdo or underdo anything they undertake, and we may expect that they will sit on the hills and wait for Osman if he chooses to amuse himself in Plevna until next spring.

Leaving General Skobeleff's positions to go towards the Sofia road, one has only to follow westward the winding valley that is the junction of the one in front of Krishine and the one in which stands the village of Brestovec. The outposts are along the ridge near the Krishine redoubt, and the village which gave the name to the earthwork is still debatable ground. A small stream cuts its way through the stratified rock of the ridges to the west, leaving an open gorge much

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like the one at Tucenica, with high precipitous sides, and here and there a ruined village. Near the village of Tyrnen the little stream meets the Vid, and there begins the great rolling plain bounded on the north by the Danube, and stretching many miles to the west. The Vid flows quietly over a broad gravelly bed, twisting and turning among the willows and poplars, past several once-flourishing villages, now without an inhabitant, ruined and desolate. Pickets are on the steep rocky hills that bound the valley on the east, and as we ride along we can see them firing at each other, and hear the whistle of the bullets. The Sofia road is a mile to the west, along the low hills that scarcely undulate enough to break the straight horizon line, and always behind the picket line, we ride down almost to the bridge over the Vid, near the opening in the hills that leads up to Plevna, three miles away. The redoubts at Opanes come up squarely against the sky along the crest of the highest hill about Plevna, which, opposite Etropol, tapers off into a gentle slope and is washed by the waters of the Vid, and there too we see the white puffs from the rifles of the pickets, and hear a cannon report with monotonous regularity. Four or five miles to the south-west of the bridge over the Vid lies this little village, Dolny Dubnik, on both sides of the Sofia road, which just here takes a turn through a shallow valley. All around the village are the deserted Turkish earthworks, a series of finely constructed forts, with deep ditch, high central battery, and long lines of trenches connecting one with the other. On the north of the town the ground about the forts is furrowed and scarred with shells, thrown when the Russians came here a few days ago, and with this exception there is no sign of any fight here. The village has, perhaps, a hundred houses standing, the rest are burned or torn down for fuel. We are in the land of plenty, but with nothing to put our hands upon. Great droves of beef cattle are about here on the hill-sides, and the butchers are up to their elbows in blood from morning to evening. It is a ludicrous scene enough, a detachment of tall, sober-looking guardsmen, who have drawn plentiful rations of live stock, fat sheep, goats, and calves, and are carrying them to the

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camp on the hill. One is struggling with two goats, another walks astride a vicious little buck, and a third ties a sheep about his neck like a great woollen wrap. There is plenty of fun when such rations are given out. In one respect we are very much like the Turks in Plevna; meat is plentiful, but bread is scarce, and even impossible to get at any price. The sutler sells plenty of bad wine and brandy, but has not an ounce of sugar or bread. The officers' restaurant, a pretentious establishment—a great hospital tent, has a long bill of fare of all kinds of meat prepared in every fashion, but you couldn't get an extra slice of bread if you should balance the weight with silver. The truth is that all the grain is back in the country, and there is no way of getting it up here. A Bulgar told me that if I would furnish horses he would bring up any quantity of flour, but that he had no animals to take grain to mill with. Cattle can be driven, they eat their way along; grain must stand in the bins because the cattle and horses are all gone. Of course the army draws from the back country great quantities of provisions with its own transportation, but the natives live on roasted Indian corn and onions—a diet to which they take kindly enough, but regret always the absence of their heavy black bread that forms the chief article of their bill of fare.

At Vraca, where the great waggon trains and the depôt of supplies were taken, there were found also some families of Bashi-Bazouks, and three score or more inhabitants, who were brought up here and were sent into Plevna to-day as a present to Osman. There were, perhaps, a dozen women in all, and twice as many children, all stowed away in two ox-carts, which were conducted along the road by a strong escort of Lancers, who kept the men of the party, a group of the most miserable beings one could imagine, in front of the carts, and goaded on the drivers of the cattle. It was a cold afternoon, and a strong wind was sweeping through the valley. How the half-naked children shivered and cuddled together to keep warm! The women sat there stolidly, their faces wrapped in the veil, and seemed to take the proceedings as a matter of course. In the last cart there was a family of Turkish gipsies, the mother as red as an Indian; a girl of,

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perhaps, fourteen years, a lithe, slender, dark-eyed creature, as beautiful a type of the true gipsy as I ever saw, and two or three small children as naked as when they were born. The mother was about half dressed; the girl was scarcely covered, for she had only a tattered pair of Tartar women's trousers hung about her waist, not concealing her slender ankles, and about her shoulders a torn piece of a Turkish soldier's coat. A shock of jet-black hair fell over her low forehead and straggled over her shapely neck. She was crying from the cold, hugging herself into the ragged bit of blue cloth, and trying to cover her feet with the hay that fell over the end of the cart. When the cavalcade of misery halted, bread was given the half-starved women and children, who shared it readily with the men who belonged to them. Bony hands clutched the loaves, and tore them in pieces; wild eyes looked for more with a sort of agonized pleading; and for the first time for days they feasted. Officers led the shivering children and my gipsy beauty into a house and gave them tea to drink, and silver money to warm their palms, and there were now plenty of tears of joy and gratitude shed. Soldiers showered on the party a share of their rations, corn was piled in the carts, and they creaked away.

One of the women sat apart from the rest during the halt, and she took no share in the feast, so I had almost forgotten her. She sat unmoved with the soldiers and horses all around her; then when the others ate she threw herself flat on the ground and sobbed. She had taken a revolver and shot a Russian sergeant dead in the streets of Vraca, after the town was occupied and quiet, and for this she sat apart, for the other women pointed at her as a murderess. One of them corroborated the testimony of the escort with a great deal of feeling, and said that the woman was mad. At all events no harm had come to her for the diabolical deed she had committed, and the comrades of the murdered soldier were giving her food and every care with a good-nature that it is difficult to conceive, and almost too much to believe. And so the train went on over the hill and down the valley to the bridge, and I saw them no more. Osman will not care for more reinforcements of this kind, it

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is certain. This little incident has been the only one of interest here for some days, for the most complete quiet prevails, and only the musketry along Skobeleff's position sounds occasionally like the roaring of a fire in the grate, and the monotonous thud of a muffled report of cannon comes over the hills to us a couple of miles away.

The situation of affairs, and the prospects of the siege as they presented themselves to a competent observer from the outside, are described in the following letter by another correspondent, also at the headquarters of General Gourko :—

† DOLNY DUBNIK, SOFIA ROAD, BEHIND PLEVNA, *November 16th.*—The campaign in Bulgaria has taken a curious turn, one that of all others would have been the least foreseen at the beginning of the war. It resembles in some respects the Franco-German War, inasmuch as the result now to a great extent depends on the possibility of hemming in and starving out a large army in a fortified place on one side, and on the other the possibility of breaking through the line of investment either with or without help from outside. In each case an army shut up in a fortress, struggling against hunger, and an army of raw levies forming outside in the hope of relieving it. If the war of defence undertaken by the Republic was decided by the capitulation of Metz, the present war will undoubtedly be decided by the capture of Plevna, or the successful resistance offered by Osman Pacha's army. If the Russians are unable to get possession of Plevna, and capture or destroy Osman's army, they may as well make peace and go home. If, on the contrary, they are successful, the war will soon be at an end. The Turks will never be able to raise another such army. If Plevna falls, there will then be only the broken army of Reouf Pacha on the other side of the Balkans, perhaps 40,000 men, to resist the onward march of a victorious army of 150,000 soldiers, which force the Russians will have by that time ready for an onward movement, without counting the army of the Yantra, required to mask the fortresses of the quadrilateral. Once the contending armies have reached this

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situation, the result cannot long be doubtful. The Turkish armies will dwindle and melt away like the snows of spring, and the Turkish power will be crushed, let us hope for ever. It is now only a question of time. Whether Osman Pacha has supplies for one month, or whether he has supplies for three months, the end must be the same. The Russians mean to keep up the investment until the Turks are starved out, and they will accomplish their purpose if it takes until next April. Either Osman Pacha will have to surrender at discretion, or he will have to cut his way through the Russian lines, and take by assault a series of Russian trenches defended by Russian breechloaders and Russian bayonets. In either case the result is disaster to the Turkish arms. The army of Osman Pacha is inevitably lost. Whichever plan Osman chooses, and whatever the result, the end of this Plevna campaign will be a military event of the highest interest and importance.

It is very evident that if Osman were to be judged by ordinary military rules he would have to be convicted of a very grave military error in allowing himself to be cooped up in a place where he must, sooner or later, yield to a more formidable enemy than the Russians—Starvation. As soon as he saw the danger of his retreat and his supplies being cut off, he should have abandoned Plevna, which had played its part, and retired along the Sofia road until his back was against the Balkans. Here he might have chosen a position stronger even than Plevna as regards natural advantages, and one which the Russians could not have surrounded or cut off. The loss of 10,000 men suffered at Teliche and Gorny Dubnik would have been avoided, and he might have been reinforced by the troops now at Sofia, which, together with the new recruits that are being raised, would have brought his army up to an effective of seventy or seventy-five thousand men. The next move of the Russians would undoubtedly have been to occupy Plevna with a large force, say fifty or sixty thousand men, and endeavour to cross the Balkans with the remainder of their army. But the line from the Balkans to the Danube is a long one to hold, even with 60,000 men, when threatened by an enemy of 75,000, and it seems doubtful

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whether the Russians could have attempted the passage of the Balkans with a sufficient force to reach Adrianople. As soon as such a forward movement was attempted Osman could of course leave his secure position against the Balkans, and marching down the Vid towards the Danube again threaten the Russian communications. By a rapid concentration and a violent attack upon some part of the long line he might break it, and make a dash for the Sistova Bridge, and destroy the Russian stores there; or, at any rate, press the Russian line of defence so hard, and threaten the Russian communications so closely, as to stop any forward movement beyond the Balkans. The Russians, in order to advance with an army of 75,000 men manœuvring on their right flank, within thirty miles of so important a link in their communications as the Sistova Bridge, would be obliged to have a much greater force than they now have over the Danube. And, at any rate, whether Osman succeeded in stopping the Russian advance or not, he would not have lost his army, as he must now inevitably do. He would have had an army with which to cross the Balkans and follow up the Russian advance in the valley of the Maritza, and make it most difficult for them to either lay siege to or mask Adrianople. Or his army might simply have been employed to hold the country not occupied by Russian troops, which would be north of the Balkans, the whole of that rich country between the Vid and the Servian frontier now feeding the Russian army, and south of the Balkans, the whole country from Philippopolis to the Gulf of Salonica, which must fall into the hands of the Russians as soon as the army of Osman is captured or destroyed.

In criticizing Osman's choice in allowing himself to be cooped up in Plevna, we must remember that he cannot be judged by ordinary military rules, for the reason that he has not an ordinary army. He has not a movable army. He has not an army with which he can manœuvre in the field, and execute the kind of movements I have supposed. He has what may be called a stationary army, one which bears the same relation to a European army that a siege train does to field artillery. It can only be moved from point to point

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slowly and with difficulty, and is incapable of doing anything while on the way. It is an army which is powerful only when planted in a network of trenches and fortifications. Osman, therefore, did probably the very best thing he could do under the circumstances with an army such as his. But it only proves, what indeed required no proof, that an army condemned by its inherent defects to act purely on the defensive must always be beaten in the end. He will, however, have prevented the Russians from crossing the Balkans this year at least, and forced them into a second campaign, and this is an immense result. The question now is, did he make the choice deliberately, having carefully weighed both plans and forecast all the consequences, or did he remain in Plevna hoping to keep his communications open, or that if cut off he would be relieved by an army coming from Sofia; or did he linger until too late out of mere apathy and indecision?

The knowledge of the causes which led to his remaining here would be just now of the greatest importance to the Russians. For if Osman deliberately elected to remain here and allow himself to be cut off, he would naturally, having had plenty of time in which to do it, have laid in a supply of provisions for at least six months. This would enable him to hold out until the 1st of May. The probability of his having done this, I must say, however, seems very slight. In the first place, so much foresight and prudence is very unusual in the Turkish character. In the next, it is no easy matter to lay in supplies for an army of 60,000 men for six months. Besides this, there is evidence that Osman hoped and tried to keep open his communications by the almost childish expedient of establishing a line of forts along the Sofia road. This would seem to indicate that Osman never believed the Russians would threaten his communications with anything more formidable than a few regiments of Cossacks. He probably thought that the Russians, upon the arrival of their reinforcements, instead of investing Plevna, would simply mask Plevna with a part of their forces, and attempt to cross the Balkans with the rest, which would have left him entire liberty of action, either to attempt breaking through the

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mask, or retire upon Sofia and operate from there on the Russian rear. The possibility of his being shut in and starved out is probably one which did not occur to him until the last moment, when it was too late to lay in a large supply of provisions and munitions. It seems, therefore, improbable that he will be able to hold out more than a month or six weeks longer, if even so much. The question then comes up, What will Osman do when he sees himself with only a week's provisions left? Will he surrender at discretion, or will he attempt to cut his way through the Russian lines, and escape with a part of his army? The impression at the staff head-quarters is that he will surrender; but I find that among officers of the line the belief prevails that he will fight, and the consequent exultation is great. They have some hope of revenge. They can obtain no adequate vengeance for the cold-blooded murder of their wounded, who were left lying around the Turkish redoubts after those terrible assaults. Russians cannot kill wounded and prisoners. But it would still be something to meet these wild beasts outside their lair, bayonet to bayonet and man to man, when the only vengeance allowed the Russians might be wreaked in fair and open fight. This satisfaction would be denied them if Osman simply surrendered when he finds himself out of provisions.

There is considerable discussion as to the direction in which Osman will attempt to break through. There are four general directions in which he might try it; but when we come to examine the Russian line, it presents barriers which seem everywhere equally insurmountable. Some suppose that he would find it easier to break through the Roumanian line somewhere near the Vid. But the fact that the Roumanians have constructed a most formidable series of trenches and redoubts, seems to render it simply impossible to break through. Supposing Osman were to break the line here, he would find himself close on the Danube, up or down which he would have to march. If he made for Widdin, he would undoubtedly be cut off by the Guard that would easily have time to head him off, and with the remnant of his army he would have to meet and attack this formidable force in the open. Should he attempt to march down the river, he would

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be just as easily headed off by the Russian forces east of the Vid, and would, besides, have the army of the Lom before him. On the Sofia road he will find the Guard strongly entrenched ready to receive him. On the Loftcha road he will find an obstacle no less difficult to surmount, and that is Skobeleff with a formidable series of trenches and earthworks, over which no force, however desperate, will ever be able to pass as long as there is a single Russian left. Should the attempt be made here, it would result in the hardest fighting on the whole line. Skobeleff so far has not only been guarding the passage, he has also been driving in the Turkish lines, and pushing them hard on every point. The two lines on Skobeleff's right on the "Green Hill" are within one hundred and fifty yards of each other, and he is gradually forcing them back. There seems to be little chance of their ever attempting to break the line here. It would be equally difficult along the Vid between Skobeleff and Gourko, for before he could go far both Gourko and Skobeleff would close in on him like a pair of scissors, and he would never be able to reach the Balkans. For a daring general ready to undertake a bold and brilliant venture, or sortie, the Radisovo side might present less formidable obstacles than any other.

I believe that if the attempt were made in the early morning, just before daylight, it would offer a certain desperate chance of success as far as the breaking through is concerned. Once through here, he would have the Russian army in his rear, with no short cut by which he could be headed off. As one army can march as fast as another, once he got a couple of hours' start, he could keep it, and his line of escape would be Tirnova and Osman Bazar. But its ultimate success would depend on the possibility of a combined effort in concert with Suleiman Pacha, which it is well nigh impossible to arrange, owing to the absence of communications. Without this, Osman, once through the lines here, would still have the army of the Lom to break through, which would simply be an impossibility. But could Suleiman know Osman was making such an attempt, he might assist him very materially. He might concentrate his whole force somewhere near the Danube, which would necessitate a like movement on the

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part of the Russians, thus leaving the road to Osman Bazar with few or no troops. Then a furious attack upon the Russians would keep this army engaged near the Danube, while Osman was flying across the country to Osman Bazar, where he would, of course, find the road clear, and thus be enabled to form his junction with Suleiman. Such a combination would, however, be difficult, even if there was the possibility of communication. Still a daring general might try it with some hope of a partial success. But there is little likelihood of its being attempted, and it is quite impossible to predict what Osman will do.

In the following letter from the same correspondent we have some interesting particulars of the operations against Plevna, together with further details of Skobeleff's recent brilliant capture of the "Wooded Hill":—

† DOLNY DUBNIK, SOFIA ROAD, BEHIND PLEVNA, HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, *November 20th.*—Beautiful weather, delightful weather, ideal weather, Arcadian weather, delicious weather—weather to make one forget the three weeks of cold and rain we had some time ago, and believe that rain and cold are terrible visitations that may afflict far-away mythical countries, but never such a soft, mellow climate as this. At last the skies seem to have espoused the cause of Russia, and the much-doubted spell of fine weather, after the October rains, has actually come. It has lasted two weeks now, and if one were to judge by appearances it may continue until Christmas, with little intermission. There has been enough rain, this year, goodness knows; there has been enough bad weather to satisfy any reasonable year, and if it were now to hold up and let the sun shine on us for another month or six weeks it would really be no more than we have a right to expect.

The siege of Plevna has become a kind of monster picnic. Everywhere officers may be seen at the dinner hour seated at their tables, dining in the open air in preference to their tents, so warm and soft are the days. All around the

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positions, where the soldiers are cooking their dinners or lying lazily stretched on the ground, basking in the warm sunshine, rise thin columns of light blue smoke, that hangs over the country in a fine luminous haze, turning these lazy autumn afternoons into a glorious Indian summer. The low hills, covered with furze and brushwood, are brown with that lustrous golden tint so beautiful in a woman's eye and hair. The fields of Indian corn, of a pale dull straw yellow, turn into gold in this warm sunshine, contrasting curiously with the light spring green of the little valleys where the grass is springing up again, as it always does in Bulgaria during the autumn.

There is nothing more delightful than a gallop across the fields and over the low hills, and down the green, narrow, cosey little valleys, and then out again across the brown and scented hill slopes. The valleys are sometimes deep ravines, thirty, forty, and fifty feet deep, and not more than a hundred feet wide, with steep precipitous sides of solid rock, down which a goat could not climb. Such a one is the ravine running from Tucenica, nearly parallel to the Loftcha road, right into Plevna, and separating Skobeleff's right wing from General Zotoff's left. You draw rein on the edge of one of those cliffs and look down with delight on the little valley at the bottom, which, with its fresh grass and the little stream bubbling through it, and here and there a clump of dry brushwood, seems expressly designed for camping out. But you may have to go a mile or two along its edge before you can find a place where you can descend into it. You go down by a steep crooked path, turn your horses loose to graze on the rich grass, make your tea, and cook your dinner, and with these walls of solid rock rising so close upon each side of you, you imagine yourself in one of those deep ravines that cross the great American plains frequented by hunters, scouts, and Indians. It was in such a place as this that General Custar and four companies of cavalry were cut off and killed to the last man.

After a dinner in one of these places, taken one day at the good old-fashioned hour of one o'clock, consisting of kibobs,

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or bits of mutton roasted on sticks over the fire, onions roasted on the coals, Dutch cheese turned into Welsh rarebits, with the aid of black bread and mustard, and washed down with draughts of clear cold water, our little party went on, and soon found themselves on the famous Radisovo ridge. Here we found things in very much the same condition as during the last disastrous attack on Plevna. The Russian batteries are in the same place where I left them six weeks ago, and the Russians have constructed small breastworks, with the guns mounted *en barbette*, which afford very little protection to the gunners. But, although these positions are within easy range of the Peabody rifles from the Turkish redoubts, not more than half a mile in front of them, nobody keeps under cover, because the Turks rarely fire. It is believed, for this reason, that their supply of ammunition is not very great. The Russians have trenches half way down the slope, and their pickets are down at the bottom. The Turkish pickets are half way down the opposite slope, and they have slight trenches in front of the redoubts, but the redoubts are all connected by deep trenches or covered ways.

The scene is the same as during the attack in September, the circular horseshoe range of hills, enclosing the kind of twin valley, with low central ridge, on which three of the Turkish redoubts are built, running through it towards Plevna. The Turkish redoubts are still there, considerably strengthened and improved, and the Turks may be seen moving about in them. But one characteristic of the landscape is wanting. It is the dead bodies of Russian soldiers that for days and weeks lay on the slope leading up to these redoubts, so thick in places that with their white trousers they looked like flocks of sheep. They have at last disappeared, for the grass is growing here again green and luxuriantly, and hides from our eyes the rotting clothes and skeletons. When the Russians enter Plevna they will find them, as Messrs. Baring and Schuyler found the bones of men, women, and children at Batak. There were wounded among these dead who, unable to crawl off the field, had escaped the merciful knife of the Circassian and the Bashi-Bazouk, and lain there for days in sight of their comrades dying of fever,

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thirst, and festering wounds, while the Turks, who kill the wounded and leave the dead to rot, will be taken prisoners, and be treated as prisoners of war, and sent to Russia, and fed better than the Russian soldiers. Suppose the French, during the Franco-German war, had killed all the Germans, wounded or not, who fell into their hands, what would have been the fate of these same Frenchmen, officers and men, when taken prisoners by the Germans? All the officers would have been tried and shot, or perhaps hanged for murder, and the men would have been decimated, and the whole of Europe, including the Turcophiles, would have applauded; and, what would have been of more importance, the French would have killed no more wounded or prisoners.

Far behind these redoubts may be seen Plevna, serene and smiling, half buried in a deep, narrow little hollow, apparently the continuation of the ravine already described, which spreads out to receive it, and closes it in on all sides, as if to protect it from the icy winds of winter and from the fierce blasts of flame that rush down on it from the frowning hills around. The roofs of the houses may be seen intermingled with clumps of trees, from among which arise two tall white slender minarets, and the small round glistening domes of a church—a picture that, cut off from its surroundings and seen by itself, would be one of quiet and peace.

But there is little chance of your contemplating it thus. To your right there suddenly bursts forth the sullen roar of a gun, followed by that curious, uncertain, twisting, whizzing scream that is so interesting when going from, and so disagreeable when coming towards, you. If you look closely you can see the shell for an instant as it mounts in the air, looking against the golden sky like a boy's india-rubber ball. It is scarcely more harmless either, as a rule, for it generally strikes against a heap of the fresh earth, and does no injury to anything but itself. The white smoke from the gun rises up against the sun and turns into a glorious yellow, deep, transparent, and many-tinted, but so full of light and fire that it seems like the soul of the terrific force that has just burst from its prison in the bowels of the gun. Around the circle of hills may be seen now and then

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little clouds of white smoke, and the deep-toned voices of the dogs of war come borne to us in a sullen roar. But there is little or no terror in their throats. Their once fierce voices seem now to be only disappointed howls, like wild beasts cheated of their prey, as though they themselves recognized their own impotence. Above the village of Grivica may be seen the two redoubts, 250 yards apart, where the Turks and Roumanians are watching each other like cats and dogs, ready to spring to the assault the first moment one catches the other off guard. Just over and behind Plevna is an opening in the hills, where we can see the valley of the Vid, and the undulating plain beyond, illumined by the sun, and so shadowy as to be hardly distinguishable from the sky.

It is here that General Gourko is watching Osman Ghazi with the Guard, ready to fall upon him at the first indication of an attempt to get out. On the "Wooded Hill" overlooking Plevna stand Osman Ghazi and Skobeleff face to face and foot to foot, watching each other with caution and respect, like two athletes who have already tried a fall, and are waiting for breath and an opportunity to begin again. Half way down the Radisovo ridge, on the "hump," and just opposite the Turkish redoubt around which the Russian dead lay for so long, the Russians have built a very strong redoubt. The two redoubts are not more than 800 yards distant from each other. The Russians have two more batteries below this redoubt down towards the ravine, and the skirmish line extends down to the ravine itself, where the skirmishers are, however, taken in rear from the Turks on the "Wooded Hill." The ridge behind Radisovo, which, with its walnut-trees, its fields of Indian corn, and its vineyards, used to be such a pleasant place wherein to lie in the shade and watch the battle, except when the Turks took it into their head to shell you out, as they did one day to a comrade and myself when we were in the middle of a pleasant breakfast whose principal element was the luscious grapes we gathered from the vines around us—this ridge is now bare and bleak. The walnut-trees have been cut down to build huts for the soldiers, the vines trampled down and cut up by artillery wheels and

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horses' feet, or burnt up for fuel. If the proprietor, Turk or Bulgarian, comes to look after his property when the war is over, he will not recognize it.

From Radisovo we went to Bogot, the Grand Duke's headquarters. My object was to see the Grand Duke and obtain permission to visit the positions. All Correspondents who have not been actually expelled from the army for betrayal of the trust reposed in them and violation of their word of honour, are allowed to stay at the Grand Duke's headquarters, wherever that may be. Now that he is at Bogot, the Correspondent is within four miles of Radisovo and Brestovec, quite near enough to be on hand in case of a battle, when they are allowed to go forward, and quite near enough to see the condition of the Russian army, and to know everything that is going on. Making these restrictions on Correspondents, therefore, is not intended to hide the condition of the army, as has been asserted, but simply as a measure of precaution. For my own part, I think the measure a very foolish and useless one. The Turks do not get their information from Correspondents, but from the hundreds of sutlers and contractors, who are allowed to go everywhere and see everything without let or hindrance, or even the formality of a pass. There are any number of spies among them.

As to the assertion that the Russians object to the criticism of the Correspondents, it should be remembered that the *Daily News* account of Krüdener's defeat at Plevna was officially published in Russia in lieu of the official report, although it contained severe criticisms on nearly all the Russian generals engaged. The *Daily News* Correspondents have probably been the most severe of all in their criticisms on the arrangements of the campaign; those criticisms have been reproduced in the Russian papers, and yet the writers are welcome everywhere in the army, because, whether rightly or wrongly, the Russians believe the criticisms to be fair and honest. When I saw the Grand Duke he immediately gave me permission to go everywhere around the positions. He said in English, smiling, "Oh, it is all right; you can go where you please;" and, with a large sign of the cross made in the air at me, "God be with you." From here we went direct to Brestovec,

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now Skobeleff's headquarters. The village is on the left of the Loftcha road, and just in front of Krishine and the famous Krishine redoubt, from which it is distant about a mile. It is, therefore, directly under the shell-fire of the Turkish redoubt, and the picket and infantry fire as well. The Turks do not seem to have very many shells, and rarely fire unless something is going on. But the night Skobeleff took the position on the "Wooded Hill" they threw twenty-five or thirty into the village. But the bullets come in like hail whenever there is anything going on in the trenches. The yard in which we were camped, just behind Skobeleff's house, was riddled with them, and when firing began we always made a rush for a large straw-stack, which fortunately was near, and waited for the storm to blow over. Then we would go out and look for the new arrivals which we had heard dropping around us. This was easily done, and we had the curiosity to dig out several. The penetrating power of the Peabody rifle, which, by the way, bears the name of the great philanthropist, is very great. We found the balls, after coming about a mile, entered the hard ground a distance of two feet, and a perpendicular depth of from six inches to one foot. This power of penetration is owing to the shape of the ball. It is not, properly speaking, a conical ball, but a solid cylinder of lead, an inch long, and about the diameter of the chassepôt bullet, simply rounded at the forward end. Although not larger in diameter than the Russian Berdan, it is nearly twice the weight, and this, combined with the necessary increase in the charge of powder, gives it a fearful power of penetration. One of these bullets will travel a mile, and then go through a horse and any number of men who should happen to be in its line of march. You hardly know when you have enough earth and stone between you and these dread missiles.

I have already described Skobeleff's capture of part of the "Wooded Hill." He executed this movement in the most dashing and brilliant manner, and it is really of more importance than I was at first disposed to give it, as was proved by two very resolute attempts of Osman to recover it. As the position is very interesting here I will describe it, so that

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anybody who has the Austrian staff map, which just here—in spite of its being necessarily very small, is correct to the minutest detail—can mark both the Russian and Turkish positions accurately. Just a little south of the spot marked as Krishine on this map there will be observed a bend in the Loftcha road. To the right of this bend will be perceived a little hollow running down to the Tucenica ravine. Before Skobeleff's movement this little hollow was the line between the Russian and Turkish positions on this side of the road. Just north of this little spot will be remarked a little hill bounded on the north by a very slight depression running down towards the ravine; and then another one bounded by a deeper hollow, which crosses the Loftcha road, and likewise runs into the Tucenica ravine. The first of these hills is the one captured by Skobeleff, the other one is still held by the Turks, and the two together, with the one on the other side of the road, are called the "Wooded Hill or Mountain." Besides straightening the Russian line, the capture of this little hill gave Skobeleff the command of a road that leads down the first-mentioned little hollow to the ravine, which is passable at this point. As there is no other place where it can be crossed between here and Tucenica, the possession of this little hollow and road really unites Skobeleff with Zotoff, who without it were incapable of reinforcing each other, except by the roundabout way of Tucenica. The distance is now a quarter of a mile instead of six or seven.

As regards the rest of the positions, the village of Krishine is not where it is marked on the map, but a little north and west of the "K" in the name. Brestovec is nearer the Loftcha road than marked, and just in the beginning of the little hollow under the name of Kirtozabene, about the last of that name. The redoubt of Krishine is just east and south of the last "n" in Tyrnen. The present Russian line extends from the little "Wooded Hill" captured by Skobeleff between the names Krisin and Krtozab, and curves round to the north through the last "e" of the other Kirtozabene, which is on the river Vid, then along the edge of the heights around the Krishine redoubt, through the letter "y" of Tyrnen, the "l" of Blazivas, the "l" of Olcagas, and then crosses the Vid. At

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the time of the last affair of Plevna the Turks had altogether three redoubts here: the Krishine redoubt, whose place I have just indicated, and two more—one between the letter "a" of Plevna, and the "a" of Pilavna; the other at the top of the "l" of Pilavna. These last were the two captured by Skobeleff and recaptured by the Turks in the last great attack upon Plevna. One of Skobeleff's heavy batteries was just to the right of the figures 127-240, and another of twenty guns down in the angle formed between the Loftcha road and the cross-country way which passes through the above-mentioned figures to the Vid.

The Turks have now constructed a formidable redoubt to the right of these figures, just where Skobeleff's battery stood, also one in the last "a" of Blazivas, and a third at the top of the "P" of Plevna, to protect the bridge over the Vid. They have constructed another here somewhere, but I am not sure of its position. The importance of this "Wooded Hill," commanding as it does Plevna and all the redoubts between the Sofia and Loftcha roads, was not at first recognized by either side. At the time of Krüdener's attack Osman Pacha not only had not occupied it, but had not built a single defence on this side. At the time of the attack in September he had the Krishine redoubt, it is true, but he allowed the Russians to get possession of that part of the hill through which the road passes, with scarcely any resistance, which enabled them to capture the two lower redoubts. As for the Russians, they have had possession of it twice and abandoned it twice, the last time certainly without any necessity. The Russian staff, not yet perceiving its importance, ordered Skobeleff to withdraw from it after the recapture of the redoubts, and it was then that Osman reoccupied it and built the four new redoubts. Todleben had no sooner perceived it than he pronounced it to be the key of Plevna. Had the Russians kept it, and had Skobeleff, after the capture of the two lower redoubts, received a sufficient force to carry the Krishine redoubt as well, they would have had possession of the whole angle between the Sofia and Loftcha roads, complete command of the Sofia road and the bridge over the Vid, and, even supposing the attack had not

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succeeded anywhere else on the line, Osman's supplies would have been cut off and the investment would have been begun then instead of a month later.

I visited Skobeleff's positions on the "Wooded Hill" the evening after the capture. Skobeleff has a heavy battery to the right of the road, on the little hill behind the hollow and road leading down into the Tucenica ravine, and to this battery I rode first, as one has from here a good view of the positions on the "Wooded Hill," the Krishine redoubt, and also a splendid though distant view of the whole country about Plevna. From here I descended into the little hollow in front of the battery, hurrying my horse's pace, when a little picket-firing began, and the Turkish bullets passing over the Russian hill in front began to drop on the slope I was descending. The reserves were snugly stowed on the opposite slope, behind two or three lines of breastworks, and in a deep sunken road that ran parallel to the positions quite safe from the balls that I soon found came over like a hail-storm and dropped in the little hollow as soon as heavy firing began at the front. I left my horse here, and proceeded forward on foot.

I had got half way up the hill, and was in the middle of an open space about two hundred yards from the extreme forward trench, when there was a sudden burst of musketry fire, the ear-splitting crash of a mitrailleuse, and a perfect storm of balls came whistling overhead and knocking up the ground around me. I looked for the covered way or trench which I knew led up somewhere to the forward trench, and which I had not taken the trouble to look for when I started, as there was then but little firing. I could not see it anywhere. Going back was out of the question, as I should be laughed at; and going forward was like storming the Grivica redoubt. All the bullets that skimmed over the Russian trenches in front—most of those fired, in fact—came along here about the height of my breast, although many struck the ground at my feet. It was a most disagreeable position. I soon perceived, however—one's sight is wonderfully quickened under such circumstances—a small hole in the ground where a trench had been begun and

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then abandoned, and into this I threw myself with a quickness that would have done honour to the best kind of skirmisher. Here I lay for half an hour listening to the fight, and trying to follow it by the ear alone. I could only hear the Russian fire, but I could judge of the Turkish by the bullets that came whizzing about and knocking up the ground everywhere around me.

The Russian fire was continuous and heavy, and there were two mitrailleuses, one at each end of the trench, that crashed out now and then in that terrific sort of way which makes one's hair stand on end. The uproar was fearful. The Russian artillery soon joined in the fray. First a battery across the ravine on the Radisovo ridge began throwing shrapnel into the Turks, who were evidently attacking and taking them in flank. Then the redoubt before Brestovec began, and I soon heard the shells coming from that direction making a kind of cross fire. Then the battery on the hill behind opened, and the shells came screaming overhead so close down that I at the first one involuntarily shrank down closer in my little pit, fearing our gunners had fired a little too low. It must have passed not more than twenty feet overhead, and had not more than four hundred yards to go before striking the Turks. I could see the flash of the guns each time, and it was not until several had passed over my head and gone into the Turkish positions that I felt satisfied the gunners had the range. What I feared most was that they would think they were firing too high and should depress their aim. This might have been serious for me as well as for the Russians in front in the trenches. But the distance had evidently been correctly estimated, and the shells each time almost grazed the heads of the soldiers, but did not, and went ploughing up the ground in the Turkish lines. Then the Krishine redoubt joined in, and began to throw shells from the other side, which, like the bullets, nearly all passed over the Russian trenches, and dropped alarmingly near me. I had the satisfaction of reflecting, too, that my little parapet of earth, quite sufficient to stop a bullet, would have been of little avail in case a shell came in the right direction. However, none did, nor did any of them fall

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among the reserves further down. What astonished me most was the low aim of the Turks. They were not more than three hundred and fifty or four hundred yards distant. I was still a little under the brow of the hill, and yet the bullets struck all around me. They evidently must have grazed the Russian parapets in front to have reached the ground here. In about half an hour the firing ceased almost as suddenly as it began, and, after waiting to see that they did not mean to commence again, I arose from my place of refuge and pushed on. It was now quite dark, or at least as dark as a moon two or three days old would allow, and I had some difficulty in finding my way. I wandered up and down what seemed to me miles of trenches in a perfect labyrinth, without being able to find Skobeleff. Some said he was in one direction, some in another, and nobody seemed to know.

Finally, an officer who knew offered to conduct me, and we were soon threading our way through the maze, approaching nearer and nearer the Turks. I was astonished to see how much earth the Russians had turned here in twenty-four hours, and the formidable works they had constructed. The Russians do not like digging, but when they do undertake this kind of work they do it well. Finally, we found Skobeleff in the extreme forward trench, which was not more than one hundred and fifty yards from the Turkish trench in front of us. He was lying down on a heap of straw, surrounded by half a dozen officers, coming and going, or passing by with a greeting, or stopping to talk about the fight that had just occurred, or giving some piece of information from some part of the line. All were merry, some were joking and laughing in loud voices, which the Turks must have heard distinctly, and understood, too, if any among them knew Russian. The parapet was just high enough to cover a man standing, and most of the soldiers had their guns laid across the parapet, ready loaded, while a sentinel here and there kept a sharp look-out. I observed that the soldiers had all dug little holes in the bank in front of them to put their cartridges in, to have them handy.

It was a strange spectacle. The long dark mass of earth raised up against the sky, thickly lined with the figures of

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men—some leaning up against it looking over, others sitting on the bench, leaning back against the bank fast asleep, others stretched out on the ground in the ditch, with here and there the silhouette of a sentinel's head and bayonet looking steadfastly over, and the pale light of the young moon casting scarcely discernible shadows from the naked trees. I stayed for a couple of hours, but nothing more happened. As an officer of the staff was then returning to Brestovec, I accompanied him, not having come out prepared in the way of clothing for a night in the trenches. Skobeleff remained all night, however, as he did the two following nights, as he feared Osman would make an attempt to recover the lost ground, and he wished to be on the ground to seize any occasion that might offer for a counter attack. The attempt was really made both nights, but was victoriously repulsed, although a Turk actually succeeded in mounting the parapet. It is more likely that Skobeleff will take the next Turkish position than that he will lose any ground he has once won.

The following notes, dated November 18, and written by a correspondent who accompanied General Gourko on his march to Jablonica and Etropol, serve to give completeness to the view of recent operations around Plevna :—

+ The Sofia road is so much superior as a highway to all other roads in this part of the country that it is as distinctly a topographical feature as the River Isker or the Vid. A broad macadamized roadway for miles, as straight as crow's flight over the gently rolling country south of Dolny Dubnik, it is monotonous in its perfection of surface, with no ruts or hollows or rough places, and must be practicable even after severe rain-storms, so hard packed is it, and so well kept. Gorny Dubnik is a little village just off the chaussée, perhaps five miles from the village first named, and at this point the hills begin to be wooded a little, and the road winds about, and has sharp gradients and a few broken places where the rivulets have washed through the bridges, and the culverts have been broken by the heavy transport trains. The Russian

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cavalry, when it overran the country, destroyed effectually every trace of the telegraph line, for the soldiers not only cut and carried away the wires, but pulled down and burned the posts, forgetting that they might be of use to run the Russian wires on, and taking a great deal of trouble to complete a destruction which, if partial, would have worked a double purpose. There is a good ditch on each side of the road, and many a dead horse lies there, thrown hurriedly in as the army of General Gourko moved forward, the rigid legs sprawled out, and the glassy eyes staring at passers-by. Little entrenched camps and occasional lines of breastworks are seen in the fields on either hand, showing where the Turks hoped to check the Russian advance along the only open line of communication to besieged Plevna. Across the road at Gorny Dubnik, or rather built up to the ditch, are the very strong earthworks which were carried by the Guards about three weeks ago. They stand along the edge of the steep slope that is here almost precipitous, and consist of one commanding fort of considerable size, and built very high, after the Turkish fashion, with the central battery, and a smaller redoubt near the road. All about these earthworks are the ghastly remnants of clothes and equipments of the slaughtered men. One does not notice at first a series of a dozen long mounds close to the ditch of the fort on the left of the road, for they seem to be part of the fortification; a second glance discovers rude wooden crosses of roughly-hewn oak, joined together with pegs, and set in the ground at both ends of the mounds. These need no explanation; their significance is clear. As the road descends and winds down the steep incline, the signs of the fierce fight are more and more frequent. A lowering sky and a desolate landscape deepen the impression, and we ride rapidly on until the wooden crosses are no longer seen against the horizon, and the slender white minaret of the mosque at Teliche comes up sharply against the dark hillside beyond.

It is no wonder that the traces of the fight at Gorny Dubnik are still visible, for it was one of the bloodiest engagements of the war. Out of three regiments one hundred and fifty-four officers were placed *hors de combat*, and of these about

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thirty, I believe, were shot dead. The capture of the great redoubt was a rare feat of arms, because it was the individual enterprise of the private soldiers that accomplished it. Although detailed descriptions of the affair have long since been sent to the Russian journals by officers who were present —it must be remembered that no correspondents were then allowed to follow the army—it is well worth while to refer briefly to the events of the engagement. It was on a foggy day, and the dispositions of the troops having been taken the night before, the fight was opened by a brisk cannonade directed towards the two redoubts, situated, as I have said, on either side of the chaussée, the larger to the westward. Three regiments of infantry, one of them grenadiers, were ordered to attack from the east, west, and south, and about eight o'clock in the morning the advance began all along the line. The Turks poured down upon the moving masses a terrible fire, which rapidly thinned the ranks, and caused the lines to waver and seek shelter, but the smaller redoubt was carried a short time afterward with a rush. Pell-mell the men climbed over the low embankment; all the Turks who did not scamper across the chaussée to the large redoubt were bayoneted on the spot. A Turkish officer leaped upon the parapet and waved his sword to attract the attention of those who were in the other redoubt, but not a man was sent out; he was shot with a revolver by one of the officers near, and the place was carried in two minutes. All the time there was the fearful rain of bullets that is so demoralizing. To show a head over the parapet of the small redoubt was to attract a hundred balls. The fire was incessant, and all further advance seemed impossible. The colonel of the regiment which took the small redoubt, twice wounded, at last went to the rear to have his wounds dressed, and other officers gave up at last the attempt to bring the men against the large redoubt—a proceeding which would have resulted in a terrible loss of life, and one which the men, brave enough as individuals, refused, or rather hesitated, to undertake.

The dead and wounded numbered many hundreds, the only two line officers who got into the small redoubt were mortally wounded, and it seemed as if the attack must fail,

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for every time the men tried to go forward they either fell struck by a Turkish ball, or sought cover at once from the fiendish hail that was thrown in their faces from the parapet of the great redoubt. Now began a kind of fight never conceived of by the officers, but which the men found, naturally enough, was the only thing to do. They had been ordered by the general when they advanced to go into that great square mound of earth that crowned the hill, and they never thought for a moment but the order must be obeyed; they only hesitated and delayed when they were told to do what every man of them felt was sheer folly. As the day went on, a few bold fellows stole out from the captured earthwork, dodged behind first one and then another natural bit of cover, crept along the ditch of the chaussée, and got into a little house which stood on the west side of the chaussée, and still stands there, all riddled with bullets. A straw-stack near by afforded shelter for one or two other soldiers who had followed the example of the first. Now it became the smart thing to do in full sight of all to jump from the little redoubt into the ditch, then rush into the little house, or behind the straw-stack. One soldier dared the other; the enterprising spirit of the first one spread like a contagion among the rest, and in an hour or two the little house was so full that those who came last all out of breath could find no cover there, and were obliged to go on further, and did go on, and threw themselves into the very ditch of the great redoubt—those who reached there. Of course the artillery had long ceased firing for fear of injuring the attacking parties, but the musketry kept up a continuous rattle, which swelled and diminished as the little knots of men showed themselves here and there. As late as five in the afternoon a hurrah was made, and a general attempt to carry the great redoubt failed again, because no man would face long the fire of the Turks. The few who got into the ditch found it the only place where there was perfect shelter, much to their surprise, and beckoned and called the others to follow them, which they did as opportunity offered, until there was quite a force under the very noses of the enemy. The Turks could not fire on them because to hit them they were obliged to

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stand up on the parapet, and this was certain death. Beams and stones were thrown over into the ditch, and the Russians responded playfully with lumps of earth and pebbles, but all the time they stayed there they were not idle, for they diligently dug in the steep bank of the ditch steps by which they could mount to the parapet. The number of men increased rapidly as night approached, and at last they with one accord clambered up the bank, sprang upon the parapet, and bayoneted the defenders of the redoubt with resistless energy. Who gave the signal for that assault no one can tell, but the brave fellows went up like one man, and primed to the full with an eagerness to revenge the comrades they had seen go down that day, they fell upon the Turks and slaughtered them like sheep. Within the narrow enclosure of the redoubt men fought hand to hand in one corner, and the white flag was flaunted in another, only to give the enemy time to assemble there for a desperate charge. By seven o'clock the only sound on the battle-field was the groaning of the wounded, a large part of whom lay on the ground neglected all night long and bled away their lives, many of them because they had no attention. Incidents of personal bravery were so numerous that day that one can almost say that it was a battle of individuals, and not of masses.

The Russian officers, no less than the men, showed themselves, every one of them, exceptionally brave and resolute. Cases are numerous where officers simply threw away their lives, because they felt it their duty to lead their men, instead of going on alongside them. One young fellow rode a white horse at the head of a company that charged the great redoubt almost up to the ditch, but, of course, fell dead in the saddle. The officers led everywhere, and this accounts for the terrible loss among them. The first act of the tragedy introduced the commanders, who directed and manœuvred the masses; the second, and the successful act, was managed by the men, and goes to prove, what indeed needs no proof, that is, the supreme folly of endeavouring to face the fire of breechloaders with troops *en masse*, or in any closer formation than a thin skirmish line which shall seek the natural cover of the irregularities of the ground, or

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make cover for itself with such means as the soldiers have at hand.

This first battle of the Guards has proved them the best soldiers in the army, because while keeping all the time the resolute purpose of carrying the redoubt as the impelling motive of everything they did, they had shrewdness enough to appreciate the value of cover as a means of accomplishing with the least loss the capture of a redoubt that would have resisted just as long as men could be sent against it in masses, for from the redoubt came a fire that nothing could stand against. The Guards learned in one day what the other infantry have been all summer finding out. How long the tactics of muzzleloading times—the rules of the military schools which are the fruit of the experience in wars before the general use of perfected breechloaders—will be clung to by the Russian officers remains yet to be seen. Certain it is, however, that the three regiments who fought at Gorny Dubnik will not forget the lesson they learned there. Perhaps they had been trained in the camp of exercise to deploy as skirmishers, and to fire from behind trees and bushes and lumps in the ground; but nine out of ten of them had never understood what cover was until that day, and probably had been abused often enough by the instructing officer, because they would always fire from the left side of a tree instead of covering the body and taking aim on the right.

At Gorny Dubnik, it is safe to say, they learned more of the useful tactics of the advanced military school than they would have ever acquired with the most diligent practice in peace. The time is long past when men must touch elbows. The infantry is the great, and I am almost ready to say, the only effective branch of the service, and as its importance increases so does the value of the subalterns rise in equal proportion. A battle will be lost or won as the individual soldiers conceive and carry out the general plan in the way and at the hour they find most proper and most promising of success. Two or three soldiers with a corporal are worth now what a company with flint locks used to count for, and in just this degree does the responsibility of the individual soldier increase. If he goes up with perfect fearlessness, and

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obeys without a question the officer who tells him to run up against a wall that is alive with men, he is well disciplined, but is none the less a bad soldier, for he throws away his life uselessly. If men understand that a certain redoubt or a designated piece of ground must be taken, they will, if they be intelligent and devoted enough, find a way to do it in their own fashion, and all the rules in the world about so many battalions in reserve and so many in skirmish line, will not help them. General Skobeleff is handling his men in just this way. Before the battle of the Wooded Hill, on the 9th of November, he explained to them in full exactly what he wanted them to do. The men had been a day or two on picket in sight of the ground, and had studied it well, of course, because they had been watching for the enemy there. He told them that he was going along with them because he knew the ground, and he did not want them to go further than the line selected for the entrenchments. Every man in the detachment that led the advance knew what was expected of him, and set about doing it to the best of his power. This is the only way to have any success before the breechloaders, for it is difficult to describe, and it is, indeed, almost impossible to understand, even on the spot, the marvellous rapidity of fire, and the enormous quantity of bullets that whizz in the air. Above the roll of the musketry is heard the whistling, like a strong wind blowing through the trees. These are the showers of bullets that rain upon the ground anywhere within a radius of a mile and a half from the fight, and the oftener a man hears this sound, the more its significance becomes clear to him. It means that every soldier of the thousands engaged is firing several times a minute, more or less, as he fires at random or takes aim. The Turk, as is well known, does not take aim, but fires from the hip when in the open, lays his rifle on the parapet when behind entrenchments, shoots somewhere in the direction of his enemy, and depends more on the quantity of bullets he sends than on the direction of them. When this fact is borne in mind, it will easily be understood why the proportion of dead and wounded is so great in every battle that has taken place. It is that the troops are under fire for a long

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distance before they can get up near enough to return it, for the Russian rifles are of so much shorter range than the Turkish, and this fire decimates the reserves often quite as much as the advancing body. If the Turks took better aim, perhaps they would do less damage; this sounds paradoxical, but is nevertheless true. It is difficult to hit a line of men coming up hill when one has to fire over a high parapet at them, and the greater part of the bullets fired under these circumstances go over the heads of the line. If the Turks stopped to take aim they would not fire one-third as fast as they do, and there would be something like a concentration of the fire, which would be possibly little more fatal than the widely-spread promiscuous hail of lead that falls all about a battle-field.

Of course, every one expected that the Guards, the picked men of all Russia, would behave admirably; but how they could be better soldiers than the infantry of the line was difficult to see, for nothing could be brought against the latter, unless it were their utter unconcern and recklessness in presence of danger. But, as has been described, the Guards have turned out better soldiers, because they have thrown aside in one short hour all their parade training, and have gone into the fight in the only way it was possible to assure success, and this of their own accord, without previous instructions, and even against the declared plan of their commanders, who pointed at the great redoubt, and waved their hands, and said, "Go into it!" meaning all the time to say, "Take it with a rush." The generals and colonels had their turn at the work, and gave it up; the individual soldiers solved the problem in the only natural way under the circumstances. And this is the reason why I consider the fight at Gorny Dubnik the most interesting one of the war. There was a great lesson learned there which may be confidently expected to have the best of results, and we shall hear no more how solid lines of Russian infantry advanced into a hot fire, and stood upright and held their pieces at the charge when they had no more cartridges, and refused to hide, but fell and fell, and all to no purpose. Of the sixty thousand odd men *hors de combat*—by the way, more than half of them have

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been thrown away—there is no denying this. The responsibility has been placed where it belonged, and all the world knows it.

The following letter from a naval correspondent describes some Russian successes and torpedo attacks on the Danube and in the Black Sea :—

‡ CONSTANTINOPLE, *November 9th.*—In my last letter I gave a slight sketch of the naval operations of the Turks since the commencement of the war up to the present time, showing how very little had been done except in the way of transporting troops. When the war broke out the Turks had a flotilla on the Danube consisting of the following vessels :—*Fethi Islam* (Moslem victory), *Burywidelau* (heart-piercer), *Semendria*, *Scodra*, and *Podgoritza*, the last three names taken from places on or about the Danube. These five vessels were small craft about 115 feet long, fitted with 80-horse power engines, and carried each of them two 80-pounder Armstrong guns in a battery protected by 2-inch armour. In addition to these armoured gunboats, there were two of recent construction, and much more formidable in every respect, the *Isher* (lion) and *Saiffee* (sword). They each carried two 80-pounder Krupp guns in revolving turrets on the upper deck, protected by 3-inch armour, and a belt of the same thickness was placed round the water-line. Their length was 120 feet, and the horse-power of the engines 100. These seven vessels, however, did not form the whole of the naval force, as there were several wooden steamers armed as gunboats, and soon after the war the two large sea-going monitors, *Loot-fi-Djellil* and *Hiftzi Rahuim*, were sent up the Sulina branch into the main river. These last-named ships were a most valuable addition to the defence, and gave great trouble at first to the Russian batteries, until one of them came to an end in a somewhat inexplicable manner—by accident, the Turks say; by the effect of their artillery fire, the Russians; and thus the affair remains in dispute. The evidence inclines in favour of the Russian view, though the *Loot-fi-Djellil* had been out of action for nearly an hour when the catastrophe

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by which so many human beings were killed took place. At all events, the fruits of victory were to the Russians, even though they had been in no wise instrumental in her destruction. Up to this time nothing was seen of the Russian torpedoes, though a good deal was said about the Danube having been mined, and Hobart Pacha was supposed to have run the gauntlet of all sorts of dangers in the *Bethymo*. I think, however, that the manner in which the Turkish ships moved about is sufficient evidence that nothing in that way had been done at that time to the main river.

When war was declared the Russians had nothing afloat on the Danube, though they probably had a steam launch or so at Ismail or Vilcova, on the Kilia branch, and had some eight or ten, all ready for launching, at Galatz, to be used as torpedo boats. Their first care was necessarily the bridge over the Sereth, and to protect this against the Turkish gunboats, a number of torpedoes were unquestionably placed across the channel where its waters flow into the Danube. In a short time, however, the Russians were prepared to take the offensive with their torpedo launches, and the first fruits was the destruction of the gunboat *Saiffee*. The batteries erected along the Roumanian shore soon put a stop to the circulation of the Turkish gunboats, and the flotilla was shortly afterwards blocked up in various places by lines of torpedoes laid across the stream. The Turks themselves assisted to this end, by keeping the greater number of the vessels moored under the fortifications of Widdin, Silistria, Nicopolis, and Rustchuk, instead of making them move up and down to gall the Russian workmen with their fire, and thus impede the erection of the hostile batteries. The conduct at this period of those charged with the defence of the Ottoman Empire is really inexplicable. They acted as if it had never been the intention to defend the Danube at all; not the slightest opposition was offered to the progress of the enemy's works on the opposite side of the river, and no provision at all was made for the movements of the gunboats.

There was no depôt of coals at any of the above-named fortresses, and it was only by an arrangement with the Varna Railway Company that a small quantity of fuel was obtained

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at Rustchuk. The supineness of the Turkish naval authorities in this respect is extraordinary, for, properly made use of, this flotilla would have delayed the Russian passage for weeks. There was an admiral sent to command the gunboats at least a fortnight before the war, and the state of the coal depôts must have been known weeks before the hostilities actually commenced. Hobart Pacha is in nowise responsible for what occurred, for Abdul Kerim deliberately refused to allow him in any way to interfere with the arrangements that had been made for the disposal of the squadron. When the Russians crossed at Sistova there was a gunboat looking on quietly, and as if regarding the passage of a friendly army, instead of hostile foes bent upon the destruction of their power, and after a time she steamed away to report the news at headquarters. The meaning of all this, as well as the general neglect of the Danube line of defence in the first instance, we shall never know, for the Turks are very lenient to military and political offenders, and such are the ramifications of intrigues in this country that once an examination were opened no one could say where it could be decently closed without allowing, perhaps, the most culpable offenders to escape. Of the armoured gunboats forming part of the flotilla, three in addition to the turret vessel *Loot-fi-Djellil* have been lost to the Turks—namely, the *Saiffee*, destroyed by a torpedo, and the *Podgoritza* and *Scodra*, which fell into the Russian hands at the taking of Nicopolis. These two small craft have since been put into working order, and will no doubt be made use of for attacking the others. Besides the vessels above named, the Turks have lost four wooden vessels—the *Sulina*, a regular 60-horse power gunboat of the old type, designed for the Baltic during our war with Russia, and three river steamers of no particular value as fighting ships, the first-mentioned by a contact torpedo, and the others by the fire of the Russian batteries.

To return to the Russian offensive operations. Their next move was of a far bolder nature, no less than an attack upon the ironclad squadron lying off Sulina, under the command of Hassan Pacha, the blockading fleet, in fact,

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designed to keep the Russian steamers shut up in Odessa and Sebastopol. A number of steam launches fitted with pole torpedoes, to be exploded by electricity, came down at night from Kilia. Hobart Pacha, who at that time held no special appointment, and was therefore without authority, had pointed out to the admiral in command the exposed position of the Turkish ships, suggesting as a defence against torpedo attacks a cordon of boats with ropes or small chains between; but, as usual, the advice was not followed, the Turks contenting themselves with keeping a good look-out on board of each ship, and having a guard-boat or so rowing round. There is reason to believe that a certain amount of signalling with flashing lights which preceded the attack aroused the attention of the Turks, so that they were found on the alert. All the men were at their quarters, the guns loaded and run out, and the ships were engaged in slipping their cables when the enemy's boats came up. The *Idjlalieh*, an ironclad corvette, was the ship singled out by Lieutenant Poutshakine, who led the attack, and had he been ably seconded by the other boats, in all probability that ship would have been destroyed. He bravely brought his little craft under the bows; but his torpedo "got foul" either of the spur or the cable, and so exploded without effecting any injury to the enemy's vessel. The water thrown up probably swamped his boat, though she was supposed to have been sunk by the Turkish fire. She had, however, advanced too close to the *Idjlalieh* for that vessel's guns to have produced any such effect, for the gunports of a man-of-war allow of but very little depression, and the Turkish man-of-war undoubtedly escaped more by accident than by good management or a carefully planned defence. The Russian attack should have been more concentrated; it failed, and the Turks have therefore every right to claim the victory. In the meantime the Russians had been fitting up several swift merchant steamers and the fast-steaming yachts of the Emperor, and shortly after this the Turks were much disgusted at hearing of the destruction of several of their collier-brigs.

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This was a game the Russians could well play, having such secure places for retreat as Sebastopol, Odessa, Balaklava, and Kertch. The run from any one of those ports to the Turkish coast is very short, so that it is not surprising that they have hitherto managed to avoid capture. No real blockade of the Russian ports has ever been instituted, so that there was nothing to prevent their free egress or ingress, and the only wonder is that the raids have not been more frequent. So slightly have the regulations with regard to blockade been maintained, that Greek ships are now arriving with corn from the Russian ports, and though an examination will probably take place, they are almost sure to escape the penalties of "breach of blockade." The Russian cruisers have been specially well fitted out for their work. Painted an "invisible" grey, lying low in the water, with nothing but pole-masts visible above the deck, and burning smokeless coal, what chance have the lumbering Turkish ironclads against them in the game of "hare and hounds." The latter can be seen miles off, their approach betrayed by the dense cloud of black smoke given out by the Heraclea coals, and thus the light-heeled enemy, by a change of course, can always avoid a rencontre. Up to the present the Russians have made no use of their Popoffkas. They have been kept well within the harbour of Odessa, and the presumption is that as fighting ships they have proved a complete failure. The Russian navy has not made the progress that was expected, and it would appear that they have really no very efficient seagoing men-of-war. The officers and seamen of the Black Sea fleet have, however, done great service in the way of torpedoes—and perhaps later on, grown bolder from the impunity which has hitherto attended their cruising in the Black Sea, the armed steamers may venture upon more extended operations.

I have not as yet, however, finished the detailed account of their naval proceedings up to the present, as there is another torpedo attack to be noticed, and the bombardment of Sulina, as well as the encounter between the *Vesta* and the *Fethi Bulend*. This last affair, which occurred on the 22nd of July last, was a very spirited contest between an unarmoured

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vessel and an ironclad, and the Russians deserve great credit for ever having thought of escaping in any other manner than by steaming away at the highest rate of speed. The Russian torpedo attack at Soukhum-Kalé was aimed at the *Arsari Shefket*, an ironclad corvette which was lying on guard at that place, towards the end of the evacuation. The Russian steamer *Constantine*, which appears to be specially fitted up for torpedo work, brought down some four torpedo launches, and sent them in on the night of the 24th of August last, when the eclipse of the moon seemed to offer special advantages in the obscurity which naturally ensued. The attempt to destroy the corvette was foiled in a great measure by the guard-boats, as any one of the launches got close to her, and the torpedo being fired at a distance from the ship's side, produced no other effect than throwing a quantity of water upon her decks. The Russians, however, managed to make good their retreat, and retired under the impression that the *Arsari Shefket* was done for, the torpedo having, as they imagined, blown such a hole in her bottom as would send her speedily below. Since this affair no other attempt had been made with torpedo boats against the Turkish fleet, and the ironclad lying off Sulina is now fitted with an electric light.

A very skilfully-planned attack against the Sulina squadron was that, however, of the late bombardment, though it only resulted in the destruction of a small wooden gunboat. The attack was of a twofold nature—the enemy were to be lured over ground previously prepared with contact mines, or, failing this, the ironclads were to be sunk or driven out of the harbour by mortar-firing, or guns pointed with extreme elevation. The flotilla safely passed Sulina, and entering the St. George's branch, which, with their usual want of foresight, the Turks had neglected to close, proceeded leisurely to Toulcha, and from thence descended the Sulina river, seeking for torpedoes as they came. Stopping at the sixth mile, securely hidden from view by a bend of the river and the tall reeds of the neighbouring swamps, the torpedo lighters were sent ahead during the night to lay the mines, which was most successfully done, though the Turks poured

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in a hot fire. The guns of the latter, however, do not range, as at present fitted, more than 3,500 yards, so that their ammunition was only thrown away to no purpose.

The next morning the ill-fated gunboat was sent out beyond the protecting chains to assist the little *Cartal* tug-boat, which had previously gone up to reconnoitre. From the former having safely passed the suspected ground, the Turks seem to have thought that the *Sulina* might do the same with impunity, not taking into consideration the difference in their draught of water. The Russian contact torpedoes used on this occasion show to what perfection the art of submarine mining is now being brought. They combined in their construction both the elements of safety in placing them, and the certainty of explosion when struck by a passing body. Small bichromate of potass batteries are placed all round the case, screwed into small cylinders, and each of these is what is called placed in circuit, with a fuze inserted amongst the gun-cotton. These electric circuits are not completed until the mine is placed, and every one has retreated to a safe distance, when, the main wires being joined, the affair is ready for action. The batteries did not work, however, as there is no fluid to complete the arrangement. The solution of bichromate of potass is placed in a glass tube hermetically sealed, and protected from accidental fracture by a thick lead covering. When a ship or other passing object strikes this arrangement, which projects outside the torpedo case, the glass tube is broken, and the solution coming in contact with the zinc and carbon plates, a current of electricity is immediately generated, and the torpedo explodes. After the destruction of the *Sulina* there was not the slightest chance of getting another vessel to mount the stream, and so the Russians had to fall back upon the other part of their plan, and commence the bombardment. This they did from a safe distance, far beyond the range of the Turkish guns, and from first to last poured in some two hundred shells, though the Turkish accounts speak of thousands. No great damage was inflicted on the town, and none at all on the shipping. The latter escaped as by a miracle; the shot and shell fell all around, but the two corvettes at the booms were never struck

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once, though had only one of the shots, fired with so high a trajectory, but fallen upon the deck of an ironclad, it would probably have placed her *hors de combat*, by sending her to the bottom of the river.

With this attack upon Sulina has ceased for the moment the Russian naval operations in the Black Sea. Hobart Pacha has left again to resume his command, and will probably be heard of shortly on the Russian coast.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL GOURKO'S SECOND EXPEDITION.

On the Road.—The Deserted Village of Teliche.—A Brigade of the Guards.—General Gourko's Headquarters at Jablonica.—Objects of the Expedition.—General Rauch's Advance upon Pravca.—Difficulties of the Campaign.—Fighting in the Mountains.—Sufferings of the Russian Troops.—Capture of Pravca.—General Dondeville's Advance.—Further Details of General Rauch's Operations.—The Abandoned Turkish Encampments.—Osikovo.—The Valley of the Mali Isker.—Occupation of Etropol.

WHILE the Russians were drawing closer and closer their lines of investment around Plevna, maintaining their positions at the cost of occasional severe contests, but still affording their desperate assailants little chance of regaining lost ground, rumours had been afloat of vigorous preparations on the other side of the Balkans for the relief of Osman Pacha. In a secret Grand Council of War held at the Seraskierate, on the night of the 14th of November, it was resolved to send all available troops for the reinforcement of what was now known as the relieving army, under the command of Mehemet Ali Pacha, whose headquarters at that date were at Sofia; and it was stated that the Porte had informed the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople that Osman Pacha could still hold out for four weeks, and that by that time Mehemet Ali Pacha would

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appear before Plevna with a newly-raised army. A few days later, Mehemet Ali advanced to Orkanieh, and the hopes of the population of Constantinople were raised to a high pitch by reports of successful engagements in the Balkans with Russian cavalry.

The expectation of relief from this side, however, was speedily dispelled. On the 16th of November that brilliant and adventurous commander, General Gourko, suddenly started from Dolny Dubnik for the south-west with a considerable force, and reached Jablonica on the 18th; where, by sending out reconnaissances, he obtained trustworthy information regarding the strength of the enemy. Before this step, the Russians, relying upon such information as they had been able to obtain, had estimated that the Turkish forces at Orkanieh, Etropol, and Sofia, probably amounted to fifty thousand men. The result of General Gourko's reconnaissances was to reduce this estimate by nearly one-half; and the Russian General's operations, which seemed to have been originally designed to be of a tentative nature, hereupon assumed a wider range and a more decisive character. General Rauch was entrusted with the command of a force destined to attack Pravca, General Gourko at the same time advancing to Osikovo. The capture of Pravca was followed by the occupation of Etropol, the loss of which important position necessitated the abandonment by the Turks of Orkanieh. The true nature and consequences of these rapid and important movements among the first Balkans, which are among the most interesting operations of the war, will be understood from the following letters:—

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, JABLONICA, SOFIA ROAD, IN THE BALKANS, *November 18th.*—Nothing can be more dreary than a deserted village. The open doors and windows seem to have an expression like the grinning of a skull, and a row of small houses is as unsightly as a shelf in the cabinet of an ethnologist. Teliche was once a flourishing town. Along the

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main street are large shops and occasional cafés, and there are many houses of more than ordinary size and of some architectural pretension. The village lies, as indeed almost all in Bulgaria do, in a little valley, and is spread out over the slopes half a mile in either direction from the fountains, the centre of the town. The courtyards are strewn with fresh straw, all that remains of the harvested grain that a few days ago was stacked in abundance here; the camp fires of the soldiers are kept burning from the brush fences and wicker corn-bins, and even the porticoes of adjacent houses supply fuel for the great flames that blaze along the roadway as soon as a detachment or a waggon train halts. Everything eatable has long since been devoured, and Teliche could not keep its dogs alive if it were not for what the army brings. With their characteristic thriftlessness, the Russians strew their route with hay and straw, and every camp is paved with hard bread and meat rations, furnishing abundant food for great droves of dogs, who stroll about the villages and disturb the quiet of the night with their discordant howlings. There is something uncanny about a deserted house with the wolf-like dogs prowling about, starting up from every corner and slinking away with snarls and howls as any human being approaches. Their jaws perhaps are drabbled with the blood of a dead horse they have been tearing to pieces; nearly every one limps about on three legs, for they fight among themselves with ferocity, and they seem to have little or no sympathy with their own race or with their masters. Pushing on from Teliche, southward, one finds the road, which a few miles back was so straight and broad, now winding and narrow, often neglected and full of great ruts and holes. The telegraph poles are nearly all standing. There is plenty of straw and unthrashed grain in the villages we pass, and little or no destruction is noticeable. The chaussée crosses the river Panega, a branch of the Isker, on a single Roman arch of stone high above the water. To the left of the bridge, in a narrow valley, is the village of Radomirce, with a burned mosque, but with a large number of houses standing unharmed, with the courtyards full of stacks of grain and unopened bins. The Turkish camps were on the

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level spots along the highway, and the ditch about the tents are still fresh there. A couple of miles beyond Radomirce is the village of Lukovic; like the former, full of grain and straw, and evidently almost entirely Turkish. We ride into the yard of the first house that looks promising, and dismount to feed the horses and take a late luncheon. Every building in the yard is full of Bulgarians who have taken possession of them, and have set up their household gods for a brief rest in their flight to what they consider a place of safety. They are quite a different type from the Bulgarians near the Danube; the men are straight, well-formed, and intelligent-looking, and the women are not unattractive, in spite of their unpicturesque costume of a scanty skirt and jacket combined of coarse blue cloth. It is evident that the Bulgarian of the mountain and the Bulgarian of the Roumanian frontier are two quite different people, for when we entered the house we were received with a genuine hospitality. Low, three-legged stools were given us to sit upon by the fire, and the old woman, the mother of an intelligent young fellow of twenty-two years or so, related with a good deal of dramatic expression the story of their flight from the Turks, who killed one of the sons, seized the cattle and the horses, and carried away the carts. She told how a hundred Bulgarians had been massacred in the village where we then were, and seemed to feel more keenly the cruelty of this deed than the sufferings of her own family. She kneaded for us a great lump of dough without yeast or salt, for these were not to be had in the village, and baked thin, flat loaves in the ashes, covering them up with hot coals, and when baked scraping off the burned portions.

In the yard of the house were a number of wicker bins, thatched with maize stalks and lined with mud. Every one of these was filled with wheat, barley, or shelled Indian corn. Although this belonged to the Bulgarians by right of possession, they gave us freely whatever we wanted, and showed none of that sordid spirit which I have found everywhere, without exception, in the villages nearer the Danube. For the first time in the campaign I found something like human sympathy and intelligence in the people, and I am now ready to believe, what has often been said, that among and beyond

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the Balkans the Bulgarian is of nobler composition than those of the northern section of the country. In the large Turkish graveyard on the hill, as we went out of the town, I noticed many fresh graves; and along the road further on, at frequent intervals, similar mounds, with little pointed stones at either end, showed when Turks had been recently buried. It was nearly dark as we reached Bloznica, at the entrance of the great hills, that are piled higher and higher until snow rests on their summits away in the southern horizon. Here again was a land of plenty, and no Bulgarians were there to share the harvest. Already the soldiers had strewn the straw all along the streets and paths on their way to the road, whither they brought forage for the animals, and in the yard where we settled for the night the ground was covered a foot deep with unthrashed wheat. Bins of Indian corn and wheat were ranged along near the stream that flowed behind the house, and we went to sleep with the horses contentedly grinding maize near our heads.

The rattle of drums, the blowing of bugles, and the bustle of packing among the waggons that were parked near our camp, brought us to our feet about ten o'clock. There was the report that a band of Bashi-Bazouks had cut the road between Bloznica and Radomirce, and to support the word of the Cossack who brought the news an occasional rifle-shot was heard in the direction indicated. Three companies of infantry happened to be encamped near the village, but the large force was several versts south along the chaussée. First one company and then another passed on the double-quick in the direction of Radomirce, and the third drew up across the road; the few ambulances that were also halted for the night were gathered together close by, and we all stood and waited for whatever was going to happen. We waited, and all was still for an hour, and then report coming that there was nothing serious, we went to sleep again, relieved that we were spared the horrors of a night combat, however small it might have been; for although the moon, shining through a cloudy sky, made the night agreeably light, still we were in a country quite strange to us, and did not even know our way about the village. The next morning

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it turned out that some artillerymen on the road had run in part of a flock of sheep, and a squad of Cossacks made a rush for the rest of them, and fired to bring them down. The Cossack patrol on the chaussée, hearing the firing, and possibly seeing the manœuvres indistinctly in the night, galloped away to the nearest village with the report of an attack.

On the road early the next morning we overtook a brigade of the Guard on their way to Jablonica, a dozen miles distant from Bloznica. I could think of nothing but a great grey caterpillar as the solid column wound about between walls of rock up the gorge toward the blue peaks in the distance. The hairs of this enormous grub were the bayonets that bristled along the line, and the regular step and the waves of movement as the column passed some irregularity in the road made the impression all the more vivid. Leaving the River Panega, the Sofia road mounts by a gentle incline the first great hill of the Balkan range. From the summit of this hill is a wonderfully fine view of the mountains. Directly in front and across a deep valley, where the chaussée winds to the left toward the village of Jablonica among the trees, and paths lead to the villages of Zahardzik and Oreshe on the right, rises the Dragovica, pushing its wooded crags out of the grain-fields along its flanks, and cutting against the sky with a silhouette of peaks and precipices, a majestic barrier, the first gate of the Balkans. A mile or two further on, down into the valley and up again upon the shoulder of the mountain, we reach Jablonica, a Bulgarian village of very few houses, but many of them commodious and well built, with a church of unusual size and a school alongside it—altogether a place which has an air of civilization and enterprise about it. The headquarters of General Gourko are in a large building of Turkish architecture, and near at hand the staff find rooms in comfortable houses. The troops are encamped about among the oak-trees on the hillside, and have plenty of forage for the horses and wood for fires. All the houses have roofs of heavy slabs of slate, and an accident of rather a serious nature which has happened here has taught the soldiers not to meddle with the framework of the houses, as they might do with impunity in other villages through which

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we have passed. General Gourko issued the most strict orders that the men should not destroy the buildings for firewood, and should not cut down fruit-trees or damage property in any way. A half-dozen soldiers were prowling about for wood, and went into the cellar of a house, and finding there a dozen or more strong supporting posts, reasoned among themselves that they were not disobeying orders because they were getting wood from underground, and then that two posts would support a house just as well as a dozen, and proceeded to cut away the timber. The house came down with a crash and buried these soldiers in the ruins, and they crawled out without a scratch. Four others, however, who were sleeping beside the house, were seriously cut and bruised, one of them mortally wounded, it is thought. So, then, here we are fairly in the Balkans, for the great wall of Dragovica is between us and the north. The outposts occupy the heights near Orkanieh, and there are fortified positions ten miles up the road. The country everywhere about here is most picturesque; the valley of the Vid near by is as charming as can be, but the season is rather far advanced for excursions, and the Bashi-Bazouks might interrupt any pleasure trip that carried one far from the troops.

The following two letters are from another pen:—

† General Gourko's Headquarters, Osikovo, Sofia Road, *November 24th.*—General Gourko's movement has been talked of for some time past, even mentioned in journals long since as decided upon. It may be well to state that it has not even yet been finally resolved upon, except as a tentative move, and that General Gourko has permission to attempt it only when he has secured this road so as to prevent the Turkish commander in Sofia from extending a hand to Osman Pacha in Plevna, and if he finds a favourable opportunity for making the passage. The prosecution of the attempt, therefore, depends greatly upon circumstances, among others on Osman making a desperate effort to escape by this side, which might necessitate a backward movement on General Gourko's part, and again on the resistance he may meet within the Balkans, the exploration

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of the various passes, and on his own judgment of the situation. Nothing, in short, is finally decided, and General Gourko has no positive orders; nevertheless, his forward movement has begun.

General Gourko left Dolny Dubnik on the 16th. He reached Jablonica on the 18th, where he halted until the 22nd, while pushing reconnaissances in different directions, and obtaining information regarding the passes and the numbers and dispositions of the Turks. It soon appeared that the enemy had occupied very strong positions just on this side the village of Pravca, four or five miles this side of the Orkanieh road. Here, before entering the valley of the Orkanieh, it passes through a very narrow crooked defile, between rugged mountains, whose sides along the road are so steep in most places, that a man unencumbered by arms and not subjected to the fire of an enemy, would find it impossible to get up. To take such positions by an attack in front was clearly out of the question. It was absolutely necessary to turn them, and this General Gourko, with his experience of the previous passage of the Balkans, and knowledge of the strong and weak sides of the Turkish soldier, was all the more inclined to attempt. It was, however, no easy matter.

The mountain paths there, so far from being passable for artillery as reported, were scarcely practicable for a man on horseback, and none but the hardiest riders with the surest footed horses would think of climbing these steep, slippery paths without dismounting. Nevertheless, General Gourko resolved to make the attempt.

The Turkish positions were nearly all on the right side of the road. Although they had occupied the other side, they had constructed here no redoubts, and dug no trenches, judging correctly that if they could hold the heights on the right side of the road, that would be quite sufficient to bar the passage. On this side they had constructed two small redoubts, encircled by mountains, every point commanding the defile with their formidable trenches. A glance at the Austrian map will show that the Sofia road at Pravca turns abruptly west to Orkanieh at right angles to its previous course. Just in this angle will be seen the mountain ridge

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on which is written the name Vichstände. It was this ridge overlooking the road that the Turks had chosen for their positions, and it was by reaching and attacking the ridge from the other end that General Gourko determined to turn them. He accordingly despatched General Rauch with the whole of the advanced guard to execute this movement with the Simionowsky regiment of the Guard, the first and second battalions of sharpshooters, one battery of horse artillery, and six squadrons of cavalry.

Rauch started from Jablonica on the 21st, with orders to march all night, as the distance was only forty kilomètres by the map. It was expected he would arrive at noon next day in time to attack. This was a grave miscalculation. Mountain roads cannot be measured on maps, or the distance should be estimated at twice or thrice that indicated, and the time required for a single horse to make it should be doubled or trebled for the march of an army encumbered with artillery. Rauch, instead of arriving on the 22nd at noon, only arrived on the evening of the 23rd. This was the only miscalculation in the whole movement, and it did not affect the result. His road was from Jablonica to Vidrar, thence down the Mali or little Isker to Kalugerovo, then up the little stream called the Pravecka, to the rear of the ridge occupied by the Turks. The road was so difficult and so narrow in many places, that broad track artillery carriages could only pass with one wheel over the side. They were only kept from tumbling over the precipices by the soldiers holding them by means of ropes passed round the wheels. The heavy munition waggons were worse still, and caused infinite trouble. Rauch, besides, found it impossible to march at night, owing to the dense fog which fills up the valleys here nearly every night at this season of the year, and renders travelling very dangerous, if not impossible.

Meantime, while Rauch was struggling on against these difficulties, General Gourko advanced to Osikovo, and waited for news of him with much anxiety before beginning demonstrations in front. His hope was to surprise the Turks, which could only be done by a rapid movement; but the day passed away, evening came, and with it word from

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Rauch that he had only got to Kalugerovo, still a long way from his expected destination. The attack would have to be given up for that day at least; but in the meantime General Gourko had not been idle. The Kuban Cossacks advanced along the road and drove the Turks from the hill in front of the main position on the right of the road. The Moscow Regiment was sent to occupy the hills on the left of the road opposite the Turkish positions, which they succeeded in doing with the loss of three or four men. One battery of horse artillery, and another of mountain howitzers, were also brought up here, and planted on the heights immediately overhanging the road opposite the Turkish works, and not more than one thousand yards distant, and another battery was planted to the right of the road on the hill, at a distance of about two thousand yards from the nearest Turkish position. These were the only two batteries brought into action on this side. They were put in position on the night of the 22nd, and opened on the Turks on the morning of the 23rd, when the fog cleared away.

The Turks answered but feebly, as they had but two guns, and these were poorly served. They did not fire more than ten or fifteen times all day. These two batteries pounded away at the Turks. All day long sharpshooters kept up a lively fire, but there was no infantry attack.

At last, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Rauch's troops were suddenly perceived on the top of the high mountain and the other end of the ridge, on the range just where they were looked for, with the Turks flying down the mountain side before them. Rauch had seized the key of the Turkish position with a loss of twenty-nine men. As this was the highest part of the ridge or range, it was impossible for the Turks to hold the positions attacked in the rear from the heights that commanded them. It was evident they were beaten, and only the approaching night and the fog prevented Rauch's troops from continuing their march along the ridge and attacking at once.

The Moscow Regiment on the left of the road now began to descend the height into the valley near Pravca, and the Turks on the heights on the other side of the road opened a spirited fire upon them; but as the object of the Russian

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movement was to turn the Turkish position from this side as well as the other, and as the plain was wide enough to get out of range of the Turkish fire, they did not lose a man. They quietly occupied Pravca, where they were likewise stopped by the fog and the darkness from joining Rauch and cutting off the Turkish retreat.

The Turks were now surrounded on three sides. As was expected, they retreated upon Orkanieh during the night, abandoning the whole position. They seem to have had enough men to protect their rear. Nevertheless, to judge by Rauch's easy victory, they did not fight as the Turks fought at Plevna, or the victory would have cost the Russians at least ten, or perhaps twenty times what it has cost them.. The whole loss was only about sixty men killed and wounded.

If we were to judge of the victory by the loss of men it would be but an insignificant affair, but military events are not to be judged in this way. It is not the passage of the Balkans yet, as there is still a higher range before us which may prove more difficult; nevertheless, there are several passes or places where a passage may be effected for making a turning movement, and the Turks have not troops to defend all. It is only a question of time and weather. These passes are difficult, but they can be made if the weather permits, and the weather, so far, remains delightful, excepting the fog at night.

We are now in the valley of Orkanieh. Our advance guard is at Lazan. There appear to be two Turkish redoubts in front of Orkanieh, which we see clearly, and a good many troops about in several camps. They are estimated at eight thousand men. The whole Turkish force here, at Etropol, and Sofia, is reckoned at between twenty and twenty-five thousand men. It is likely that General Gourko will seize the town of Orkanieh itself without attempting to force the Pass behind it. His further movements will then depend on the success of the demonstration against Etropol made at the same time as the attack here by General Dondeville, with a brigade from Loftcha. General Gourko's intention now is to attack and take this place, as both it and Orkanieh would furnish good winter quarters.

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NIGHT.—News has just been received here that Etropol is taken. This is no less important than Pravca. There are two roads and passes behind Etropol, either or both of which may be attempted by General Gourko. One leads to Babamonak, behind Orkanieh, and would therefore enable him to turn the Orkanieh Pass altogether, and cut off the troops stationed there from Sofia; the other leads to Slatica, and General Gourko having left a sufficient force at Pravca to hold Sofia might march to Kezanlik, attack Reouf there on one side, while Radetzky attacked on the other, and thus take Reouf between two fires and two armies—together more than double his strength—with a result that cannot be doubtful. It is likely, however, that General Gourko will try to destroy the Sofia army before going further; but it will be seen that he has several plans before him, either of which may be carried out unless he should be called back towards Plevna by some desperate attempt of Osman, which does not seem probable. At any rate, it is not likely that the Sofia army will make any very serious opposition to General Gourko's splendid army, which is probably twice as strong.

† GENERAL SKOBELEFF'S HEADQUARTERS, BRESTOVEC, LOFTCHA ROAD, *November 26th.*—I have just returned here from Osikovo, in the Balkans. General Gourko was starting for Etropol when I left, undoubtedly with the intention of trying a passage towards Slatica. This pass was unfortified five days ago, and although the Turks could have fortified it since, it does not appear probable that they have done so. They are fighting with little heart. Besides having neither the courage nor the discipline of Osman's army, they are not armed so well. Three or four kinds of arms have been captured, principally Sniders. They have very few Peabodys, and some have even old-fashioned muzzleloaders.

General Rauch was shelling the two redoubts in front of Plevna from the mountain range opposite captured by him. The sound of his artillery followed me to Jablonica, but while General Gourko has left a considerable force here to watch Orkanieh, I do not think he meditated an immediate

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attack. He would probably prefer turning it, taking it in the rear, by marching from Slatica to the junction of the Sofia road, in which case the Turks at Orkanieh would be completely cut off and obliged to surrender. They are estimated at eight thousand men, but the success of General Gourko's movement, as I have already said, depends on the weather. That, unfortunately, has changed. The change began when I was at Dolny Dubnik, and became so heavy before reaching here that it was difficult, what with the fog, to find my way. It is now pouring in torrents, with a very cold wind blowing, and it looks as though it might last some days. I am afraid this sudden change will interfere very much with General Gourko's movement. Two or three days' rain will render these mountain paths impassable. However, he may get through, and succeed in opening the road before the weather finally breaks up.

I was much struck with the manner in which General Gourko handles his forces. He is more cautious than in the summer. There is much more order and foresight displayed, and also more precision in the movements, which begin to remind one of the Prussians. I predict a great success for General Gourko, unless his plans are foiled by the weather. The Turks, I may remark, probably having heard of the Russian reluctance for building bridges, have very kindly left all the bridges—and they are numberless—uninjured. The Turks have burnt no villages along the road, but have murdered a great many Bulgarians. A woman in Lukovic told me that all her relations had been murdered within the last month.

The Bulgarians are returning to the abandoned villages. Those from the burnt villages nearer the Danube, as Tristenek, have installed themselves comfortably in the Turkish houses. The wounded from Plevna dragged themselves along this road until they lay down and died by the wayside. The Turks have not even enough feeling to look after their own wounded, and, indeed, the Russians murdered on the field of battle by the Bashi-Bazouks are more fortunate than the Turkish wounded. The Turkish population have all fled over the Balkans. They are even flying from Orkanieh. The day

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after the capture of Pravca, we saw what appeared to be the exodus of the whole population of Orkanieh flying along the Sofia road with their goods and chattels.

I have purposely abstained from mentioning the strength of General Gourko's force. I can only say it is much larger than any force he can possibly meet before reaching Kezanlik, should he go there. According to all appearance the Turks are on their last legs. My belief is they have, after one campaign, reached that condition of exhaustion which, during the American war, preceded the collapse of the Southern Confederacy. As Sherman said of the Confederacy in the last year of the American civil war, the Turkish Empire is now a mere shell. Once the Russians break through the outside crust, where all the strength is displayed, they will find absolutely nothing to oppose them. The war might be brought to an end in two months, were it not for the approach of winter. The Russians are just one month too late, but they may even yet accomplish it this winter.

The writer of the two foregoing letters having, as will have been observed, rejoined the army of investment, the narrative of the operations under General Gourko in the Balkans will for a time be furnished by the correspondent whose letter, dated from Jablonica, on the 18th, has already given some information regarding this important episode in the history of the war. The following letters describe, from other points of view, operations with which the reader is already acquainted:—

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL RAUCH, PRAVCA, NEAR ORKANIEH, *November 24th.*—The mountain sides were echoing with the sounds of heavy cannonading and brisk musketry fire as I rode along the Sofia road southward yesterday morning, across the river Mali Isker, and past the village of Osikovo, the present headquarters of General Gourko. The day was warm; the sun was shining in the almost cloudless heavens. Seen through the clear air the distant troops could be discerned among the precipitous mountain paths, which zig-

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zagged among the rocks and trees and lost themselves near the top. This force was the left flank of the central column, and the Turkish position, I soon saw from the puffs of smoke of the bursting Russian shells, was along the range of mountains forming the southern horizon.

Riding at once to the battery, I found that the troops were all in position, and were only waiting for the movements of the other two columns, the one from the direction of Etropol, the other commanded by General Rauch, which was expected to debouch upon the western extremity of the range of peaks held by the Turks. Meantime a regular cannonade was kept up by the battery of nine-pounders near the road, making targets of the Turkish redoubts on the opposite peaks, and now and then sending shells into the lines of the intrenchments about the eastern end of the range. From the battery the road descends sharply to the eastward, curving around the range commanded at every point by the Turkish positions, then out into the plain past Pravca to Orkanieh. A few sharpshooters who ventured down the road kept up an irregular fire against the redoubts on the peaks above, and skirmished with the Bashi-Bazouks who swarmed in the woods along the route. The only signs of life in the Turkish positions were occasional shells from the battery of two guns posted on a prominent peak, all of which fell far short, and the frequent rattling volleys from the earthworks.

In order to get a view of the whole of the field of operations, I climbed the steep I had observed as I came along the road. From this point a landscape of wonderful beauty was disclosed on every side. Southward could be seen all the Turkish earthworks, the range of which, even from this position, cut off the view of the valley beyond, except where Pravca is seen lying among green fields a short distance west of the road which turns around behind the Turkish position, and runs westward towards Orkanieh. Enjoying thoroughly the varied succession of charming views from the east, where the great broken mountain hides Etropol and the Mali Isker, through the south and west, where the blue peaks towards Sofia form the distant horizon, to the north, where beyond the brown forests and dull yellow fields rises the isolated

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mass of the Dragovica, the first gate of the Balkans, near Jablonica, the day passed pleasantly, somewhat enlivened by watching the shells burst. We had become familiar with the sound of the enemy's shells plumping into the mountain below on our right. To be sure, the hostile force was scattered along the peaks less than rifle range away, and separated only by a narrow gorge with precipitous sides. Cannon on the peak where we were, and below to the left, sent their shots home to the mark every time, but we did not suspect the Turks of playing us a trick. They did, however, and chose the moment when we sat down to eat our luncheon in the shade to burst shrapnel over our heads. It was the only one they sent, and if they had sent another it would not have found us again.

The sun was already low in the heavens, and the cannon smoke began to take a delicate purple tinge, when the enemy's battery away down near Pravca fired rapidly, and the echoes of the shots behind the range down in the valley hidden from us resounded through the gorge. Rauch was over the mountain and would soon be in sight, we hoped. Suddenly we saw, away on the right of the opposite range, puffs of smoke on the crest of the flat-topped peak, and then, even before the reports of the shot reached us, a close line of men rose up against the sky on the top of the earthwork, and another and broken line straggled quickly down and away from the first, one or two men stopping to fire, but generally running down the steep declivity into the undergrowth. The black masses which had been lying there all the afternoon were suddenly animated as the horizon became alive with the forms of Russian soldiers, and they swept in a mass down the incline, little puffs of smoke bursting from nearly every rifle, for they fired as they ran. The line of Russians stood a moment on the earthwork, firing rapidly, then leaped down and skirmished after the flying Turks almost within bayoneting distance. This was the attack of General Rauch, and it was as unexpected and welcome to us as it must have been surprising and discouraging to the Turks. Almost immediately solid formations were visible on the peak, one company to the left on the further side and a short line of skir-

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mishers, followed by two companies advancing along the path on the side of the mountain towards us, now in deep shadow. They disappeared behind the base of the next nearest summit. This brilliant little episode, occurring as it did in full sight of all the troops, just as if it were enacted on a stage in an immense theatre, caused the greatest enthusiasm and excitement among them. The batteries took the first note of the fight on the mountain as a signal to fire volley after volley into the redoubts on the west end of the range, and the narrow gorge echoed and echoed again, and the mountain sides repeated and magnified the awful sound of the shells as they tore their way through the thin air. The shrapnel rattled and cracked all over the summits where the Turks, now excited, kept up a constant rifle-fire, and the peaceful quiet of the twilight hour was changed to Pandemonium by the clanging and screeching of the shells pounding the mountain top. A cool breeze springing up from the north began to drive the low-lying clouds through the valleys, while Rauch's advance appeared on the mountain, and soon great masses of mist poured through the gorge, rising higher and higher, and sweeping over the Turkish redoubts. Just as they were seen to direct their fire with redoubled energy down into the valley towards Pravca there came up to us a sharp popping of musketry below, and we knew it was the Moscow Regiment. It had accomplished its march, and was making its contemplated movement around the range along the road. The fog hid the valley and Pravca from our sight; but until the opposite side was shrouded in the drifting mist we could tell exactly how far the infantry was advancing by the direction of the Turkish fire from the redoubts. Rauch's engagement was literally a battle above the clouds. In a few moments both those below and those in the clouds were enveloped in the same great mass of opaque mist, and the firing ceased.

We were now on an island in a great grey sea, for the clouds had driven in on all sides, hiding completely the earth below, and even the adjacent peaks. A faint streak of yellow still lingered in the western horizon, and all about us rose out of the rolling waves of mist the sharp purple peaks like islands

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in a frozen Arctic sea. The soldiers lighted their camp fires among the bushes, and we were all prepared to bivouac there. Perfect quiet reigned. The moon rose grandly out of the clouds and lighted up the weirdly impressive landscape. On came great rolling waves of mist, appearing solid as snow in the cold moonlight. Around us were the forms of horses picketed in the undergrowth, groups of soldiers gathered about the fires, solitary sentinels motionless at their posts. It was a picturesque scene to be long remembered.

About seven o'clock we heard hurrahs on the range opposite, and the victorious cheering was taken up and repeated all along the line, from peak to peak and down into the valley; but the redoubts were not yet taken, and the quiet of the night was broken again.

At two o'clock we heard distinctly through the mist, as if very near us, first a few shots, then the cries of the surprised Turks, and the Russian soldiers shouting to one another, some to let the Turks run away if they chose, some to bayonet them on the spot. The oaths, the groans, and the smallest words came clearly to our ears, and we knew that the remaining positions were taken. One hundred and fifty volunteers from the Isma Etowsky and Moscow Regiments had climbed the steep mountain side, and fallen upon the few Turks that remained, only thirty or forty, and driven them out without losing a man.

This morning a drizzling rain has drenched everything. The clouds that we had poetized over the evening before had risen, and turned to rain, and we could not see the length of the small bivouac. Towards the middle of the forenoon the clouds broke, and we could see down to Pravca. So we led the horses with great difficulty by a tortuous, untrodden route into the valley, where we met General Gourko and his staff on the road, and all climbed the mountain by a well-cut path to the Turkish position.

The day was now quite clear, and the great fertile valley lay below us, bounded on all sides by the serrated summits of the high mountains. Orkanieh was plainly visible three miles away, and all about the town the tents of great camps, even upon the flanks of the adjacent mountains. Between

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the village of Lazan and Orkanieh two great redoubts black with troops occupy a low ridge, and behind the town on the slopes of the mountains are other fortifications. Beyond Orkanieh the road turns around the point of the mountain and enters the defile of the Baba Konak Pass, at the entrance of which nestles the village of Vracesi. The mountain we were on is exceedingly sharp, and the Turkish works could have been carried only as they were by the flank. About two score of the enemy's dead were found on the mountain.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, ETROPOL, IN THE BALKANS, *November 27th.*—The occupation of the first pass of the Balkans was such a signal success that the details of the movement of General Rauch's column—the one which turned the Turkish position—will doubtless be of general interest. The whole affair was from beginning to end exceedingly dramatic and picturesque, full of little events of unusual significance, as testifying to the individual enterprise and courageous devotion of the soldiers. General Rauch's force was composed of three hundred Kuban Cossacks, two battalions of sharpshooters, one battery of horse artillery, and the Simionowsky regiment of the Guards. It marched in the order in which the troops are named, at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st, from the camp at Jablonica, with instructions to reach, if possible, the crest of the range of mountains bordering the Orkanieh valley in the north the next day. It was then to co-operate with the two other columns, one of which marched down the Sofia road, and the other off to the right to make a demonstration against Etropol. On the Austrian map the distance from the village of Jablonica in a south-westerly direction to the valley of Orkanieh appears to be a short day's march, but the roads or mountain paths are so tortuous that the real distance to be traversed is nearer fifty kilomètres than fifteen, to say nothing of the difficulties of the ascents and descents, and the condition of the paths.

The column marched three hours only the first afternoon, and bivouacked from five until eight o'clock, when it moved

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again, continued to march the whole night, and reached Vidrar, a village in the Mali Isker, at eight o'clock in the morning. At the first bivouac no fires were lighted, and the men ate their hard bread without soup or tea. The stay at Vidrar was very short, for it became apparent that unless it pushed rapidly on the force would not arrive until long after it was expected. The Bulgarian guides said that if the route which had been decided upon were followed it would lead upon the right of the Russian position, and not around the left of the Turkish line, so a new route was chosen, and the detachment advanced as rapidly as possible. The paths from Vidrar southward were all simple mountain trails, over which probably no wheels had ever passed, and it became a matter of infinite difficulty to bring along the artillery, and especially the caissons with the ammunition. There were some one hundred and twenty picks and shovels with the force, and a corresponding number of men were detailed to clear the road and make it passable, working in two reliefs of sixty men each. The cannon were moved by twos, and each pair had attached to it two companies of infantry who assisted the cannons and caissons to pass the difficult places, working also in reliefs of half their number. The path led along the ravine where the Mali Isker twisted and turned among the crags, and before they left the river to take the direction of the village Kalugerovo, the next village on the route, they had crossed it ten times, each time with much trouble. The way led over great ledges of hard, flinty rock, full of seams and fissures, so difficult for the horses to pass that several of them caught their feet in the crevices and tore the hoof from the bone. Horses were not too numerous, and it was impossible to proceed without them, so the hoofless feet were bound up in rags, and the poor beasts limped along dragging the heavy caissons and guns. The whole day of the 22nd they climbed along the mountain paths, step by step, not advancing two kilomètres an hour. The men tied ropes to the muzzles of the guns, and kept them from falling over the precipices, but three caissons full of ammunition went over in spite of all efforts to prevent the accident, and two horses were killed and one Cossack mortally wounded;

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the other men who were with the caissons scrambled up in time to save themselves. The men proposed to leave the remaining caissons, and to carry the powder and shells singly by hand; but as this was, first, contrary to general orders, and, secondly, a proceeding evidently too dangerous to be permitted, the efforts to bring forward the caissons were renewed with redoubled energy.

What the men suffered on that long march no one may fully describe. They had only their hard bread to eat, and they were accustomed to meat and plenty of it. Loaded with a great deal of ammunition, they drew themselves up from rock to rock with severe labour, for it must be remembered they were not mountaineers. On past the village of Kalugerovo, where they left two cannon for want of horses, they reached at last the village of Lakavica, near the river Pravecka, at nine o'clock in the evening. Having met ten of the enemy, a small band of Bashi-Bazouks on the road, they were obliged to take extraordinary precautions to keep silent, and finding it quite out of the question to proceed by the unexplored paths in the night, the dense fog which had enveloped the landscape all day still clinging to the earth, they decided to bivouac, and they lay down without fire, and slept in an instant. Two men died of fatigue on the spot, the rest were so worn with want of sleep and severe exertions that they were like drunken men, and every man of the outposts was found by the officers who went the rounds to be dead asleep, and no scolding or threats could keep them awake, although they were in the very face of the enemy. The horses trembled all night, not from cold, but from overwork, and they threw themselves flat the moment they were taken from the traces.

The night, chill as it was, seemed far too short to the exhausted men, and on the morning of the 23rd they worked their way on again, crossing the Pravecka, and following up the ravine to the right and southward. A single mountain range, partly held by the Turks, now separated them from the plain of Orkanieh, and the end of their climb seemed at hand. Suddenly came a sharp infantry fire upon the column from the heights along the ravine, where it made a turn around a

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mountain; and, though not completely surprised, there was, of course, a halt and a general fusillade. Two hundred Kuban Cossacks had already passed the point where the Turks were assembled, so they dismounted and left their horses and climbed up the precipitous mountain side to get upon the flank of the enemy. At the same time two battalions worked their way up the crags higher and higher towards the summit until they looked like ants crawling along among the bushes and rocks. The enemy continued their fire, and, of course, shooting too high, did little damage, only wounding two men and killing and wounding several horses. The appearance of the infantry in front and the dismounted Cossacks on the flank demoralized the Turks, and they fled, having delayed the advance of the column a couple of hours, the whole of which time a brisk fire was kept up from both sides, with, as I have said, a trifling loss. On they went again as before, dragging, pushing, pulling the cannon, and gained without further resistance the summit of the range where the Turkish position was in the middle of the afternoon.

The men were almost on their last legs, and it seemed as if nothing but the sight of the enemy could bring them further on. There was no grumbling or unwillingness, but simple exhaustion, inability to march and climb any more. The officers took off their swords and revolvers and left them with the baggage, then led their troops in the direction of the enemy's position, telling the men that they went against the Turks unarmed in perfect confidence that no harm would come to them in the company of the brave soldiers who had accomplished so much and suffered so much in the last two days. The men thus led joined in an encouraging hurrah and went merrily on. Finding the Turks in an earthwork on the summit of a truncated peak, they charged upon it and took the position late in the afternoon. One approach was through a narrow defile commanded by the Turkish rifles, and here several men were wounded. Part of the cavalry skirmished off into the plain near Orkanieh, and suffered somewhat from artillery fire; but the total losses of the whole movement were only twenty-nine wounded and two

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dead. The experience of those two days is worth much more than it cost, without considering the easy victory gained at the end of so much toil and difficulty. It has shown General Gourko that his untiring energy need not be restrained, for he has just the material in his hands to work out with zeal and earnestness his own plans. His men die of fatigue, but they go on; and the sound of the enemy's fire is the only stimulant they require to make them forget their weariness and their sufferings and become fresh again in an instant. The Guards, too, have profited by their experiences at Gorny Dubnik, and now attack the enemy in skirmishing order, and consequently lose fewer men and accomplish their purpose much more easily. In a previous letter I have described the way in which they learned these tactics, and, as I had reason to believe then, they needed no second lesson in this kind of fighting.

The march of General Rauch's column was so much more difficult and dangerous than that of the other two that it is the central chapter of the history. General Dondeville on the left did most important work in his rapid advance on Etropol and his descent into the plain of Orkanieh near Pravca; for he completed the flanking movement on both sides of the enemy, and thus made the position untenable. The Sofia road, where it passes through the gorge of the Pravecka, just before it turns around the mountain held by the Turks and takes the direction of Orkanieh, was so commanded by redoubts and a battery with two mountain guns, that an advance for the central column further than the top of the ridge north of the gorge was quite out of the question. Nevertheless, positions were taken so near the Turks on the sharp summits directly opposite them that they were unable to make any movements in the daytime. The horse artillery got pieces mounted hundreds of feet above the road without any paths to drag the guns up, but by sheer lifting and hauling. The Turks, who on their side had dug a zig-zag road all the way up the mountain for their troops and cannon, were surprised, and reasonably, at the Russian energy and rapidity of movement, and they did not lose any time in evacuating their positions the moment they understood they

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had only one road left open to them. The battle of the 23rd was comparatively a bloodless one, but the results are just as important as if the loss were a thousand and a half instead of a score and a half—this is obvious. To out-manœuvre an enemy brings more credit upon a general than to meet an enemy with great loss by throwing the troops upon him. As weapons are perfected the importance of the flanking movements increases. It is already proved that an attack against entrenched men armed with breechloaders is generally a mistake. When a soldier could run a hundred yards while his enemy was loading, it was quite another story. As a spectacle, the capture of the Turkish position was unequalled. The smallest movement on either side was visible from the peak where I took my place early in the day, in company with some officers, and the little battery where we sat did not fire often enough to attract much lead from the other side. The infantrymen lay just behind the crests of the peaks on either side of us, and below, nearer the enemy, whom we could see plainly as they rose to fire. The road through the gorge was hidden by the crags below us, but all the action took place hundreds of feet higher.

When the day grew old and the clouds began to drift around below us, and hide the valleys from our view, the majesty of the landscape surpassed description. The cannon smoke drifted slowly away in pale, violet-coloured wreaths, and mingled with the mist that became rosy where the rays of the sun touched it, and contrasted the cold grey masses in shadow strongly against the brown mountain sides. Even the excitement of watching the fight could not make one forget that all about us were views of wonderful beauty, and involuntarily one would turn away from the battle to admire the landscape. Then, as the clouds crept up and poured over the range where the Turks were, hiding them completely from our sight, little by little the firing ceased, until the quiet was almost oppressive after the thundering and crashing of the cannon.

Darkness came on, and the scene was no less picturesque. The rough mountain-side twinkled with fires, each with its little knot of soldiers making tea, and relating over and over

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again, with animated gestures, the story of Gorny Dubnik. The stacked rifles glittered with red reflections from the flames, and the indistinct shapes of horses tied to the scrub-bushes made mysterious groups in the dim light. The moon rose, and all was changed like the effect of a transformation scene in a theatre. The great sea of clouds below us heaved and swelled, and the huge billows came rolling on, threatening to sweep over us; thin and vaporous as they were they had all the appearance of solidity like snow as the moonlight fell upon them. Nothing could be heard for two or three hours but the low conversation of the men and the stamping of the horses, and then broke into the stillness of the night a cheery hurrah directly across the gorge, and another and still another, which was answered by the men along our side, till the valleys echoed repeatedly with the sound. We knew that Rauch's men had found their way in the darkness and mist even into the opposite redoubts. But still the strongest position was in the hands of the enemy, and we heard no noise in that direction, until at two o'clock there was a sudden crack, crack of rifles, then yells and curses; and, as plainly as if across the street, the sounds came to us of the Russian soldiers crying, "Let the poor devils go!" "No, no! kill them! bayonet them!" "Enough, enough!" and prayers for mercy of the wounded Turks; then all was still again. It passed like a moment in a dream, and we all fell peacefully asleep, satisfied that the mountain was gained, and did not awake until the rain pattered on our faces in the early morning. A few score of volunteers from the Moscovsky regiment had clambered up the mountain side, which was so steep that the Turks did not believe it passable, and had fallen upon the surprised enemy and routed them, bayoneting a few.

In the morning all the poetry of the previous evening was washed out of us by a drizzling, drenching rain, and an impenetrable mist enveloped us. We determined to make the attempt to get down to Pravca; and, starting with a corporal and two men to escort us as far as the further point of the ridge, we went on in that direction. The path was a simple goat trail wide enough for a horse to walk along, but

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part of the way too narrow to pass any one. Imagine our surprise at finding away out on the point, almost overhanging the gorge, a half battery of guns of the horse artillery. The mist drifted away, so we could look across, and there was the Turkish redoubt so near that we could almost throw a stone into it apparently, though it was really about 800 yards distant. The gunners of the horse battery were bivouacked behind their guns, which were in a little earthwork masked by bushes. They had their shelter tents rigged up on the bushes, and were sitting out in the rain patiently enough. How they got their guns up there, along a road which we, on horseback, found difficult enough to pass, I have no idea. The men seemed to take it as a matter of course that they did it, and all I could get from them was that they had hauled the guns up.

From this battery down into the valley it was a difficult descent. Leading our horses, we clambered down the rocky ravines for nearly an hour before we came to the plain, now flooded with warm sunshine, which rapidly dissipated the clouds. General Gourko and staff came along shortly after we reached the chaussée, and we accompanied him to the Turkish positions. As we slowly mounted the zig-zag road cut by the Turks, the wide landscape below us was unfolded more and more. First, the village of Lazan, and then the town of Orkanieh, half hidden by streets, came in sight, and a multitude of tents of the Turkish camps all about. We could see the chaussée full of carts and people fleeing from the town toward the mountains behind, and the redoubts in front were black with Turkish troops. A mile or two behind Orkanieh the Sofia road turns sharply around the base of a mountain near the village of Vracesi, and enters the defile which leads up to the Baba Konak Pass. We could see the long train of fugitives slowly turn about the mountain and disappear; a column of troops was moving along a road parallel with the chaussée. One of the camps was deserted, but the tents were still standing, and there were other slight indications of wavering on the part of the Turks. The top of the mountain which we ascended is at places but a few rods wide, and then the ground descends abruptly,

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almost perpendicularly. All over this summit, broken as it is by a dozen peaks of various shapes and heights, the Turks had dug little redoubts and rifle-pits, which were strewn with Peabody cartridges unused, and now and then we came across a dead man, and here and there a Schnider rifle. On the western extremity of the range, where Rauch's column charged, were twenty or thirty dead, among them a fine-looking blonde individual, wearing a red coat, and supposed by everybody to be an Englishman. I did not see any one who had found the papers of the dead man, but about the deserted camps were various small pieces of English newspapers. Most of the soldiers already on the summit when we arrived were as white as millers with the flour they had found in the Turkish tents, and pancakes were frying on all sides over the fires which had been lighted by the Turks and had not yet gone out. The soldiers did not fail to recognize immediately the superiority of their enemy in their camp arrangements, for they marvelled at their little platforms for the tents dug out of the steep mountain side and built up over the descent with sticks and branches, leaving a floor perfectly level and comfortable to sleep on.

We rode back to Osikovo that night, a distance of fifteen or sixteen miles, expecting to go the next day to witness the movements about Etropol, but about ten o'clock in the evening came the news that Etropol was evacuated, so there was nothing to do but to quietly take possession of the place, and the next morning, the 20th, General Gourko moved his headquarters there. There is a small collection of houses on the Sofia road, just north of the Mali Isker, named on the Austrian map Tornovski Han, but called by the Bulgarians Orsikovee. This was quite an important position a few days ago before the Pravca Pass was taken, as it commands the bridge over the Mali Isker, and is the point where the road turns off from the chaussée towards Etropol. This road is a cart track that follows the river bank up the valley—a rough path, with here and there paved bits where the freshets have washed away the gravel, and the peasants have put in pavement to make the way passable. It is about twenty kilomètres from the chaussée

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to Etropol, and the valley of the Mali Isker is everywhere delightful.

The meadows are still green, although all the leaves on the mountain trees are dead and brown, and, as we rode along, the air was as soft as in springtime. Bulgarians were trooping down, laden with the plunder of the Turkish houses in Etropol, even to the iron window-bars, and a stream of infantry and artillery was moving up the valley. Three or four dead Turks near the road, a few kilomètres below Etropol, with a burial party at work, proved that there had recently been a skirmish there. Suddenly, and without warning, while we were enjoying the warm weather, arose a cold north wind, blowing furiously. The clouds which had been drifting over the mountains whirled about, gathered, and settled, and a cold rain fell, which turned soon to snow, and in a few moments the spring landscape was transformed to a winter one, and everything was white with snow. All that afternoon and during the night the storm continued at intervals, and as I write there are two or three inches of snow on the ground. The camps are anything but pleasant, and although there is no great degree of cold, the soldiers are uncomfortable enough in the wet.

The capture of this place was accomplished without loss, and by the same kind of movements on a smaller scale that gained the positions at Pravca. The Turkish earthworks were constructed on the pointed mountains near the village; but there were left unoccupied the summits adjacent, which commanded the whole valley and the lower peaks with the Turkish redoubts. To get possession of one of the highest mountains was the work of many hours for the Russians, who dragged up and planted cannon there by the aid of the Bulgarians, who brought their cattle along that were used to mountain work, and could climb where the Russian horses were helpless.

The first position was gained in a curious way. It was observed that the Turks did not stay in the earthwork, but in perfect confidence that no one could climb the hill, left an outpost in the redoubt, and the main body remained in the camp back on the hillside. Some volunteers started to climb the steep

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at four o'clock in the morning of the 23rd, and reached the summit near the redoubt at half-past seven o'clock, carrying nothing with them except their rifles and ammunition. When they came within sight of the Turkish camp they were perceived by the Turks, who rushed immediately to occupy the redoubt. The Russians, comprehending at once the importance of first possession, strained every tired muscle to reach the coveted entrenchment before the enemy, and a curious race followed in dead earnest. But the Russians climbed the parapet and were inside just before the Turks arrived, and then the affair was settled in short order. The flanking movement first mentioned having been made, the Turkish force abandoned the town and the positions, and withdrew upon the Slatica Balkan to their fortifications there, leaving behind three Krupp guns.

Etropol is a large village, and stands literally upon the Mali Isker, here a rushing mountain stream, for many of the houses are built over the river. The houses are jumbled together along narrow, crooked streets, and in the main thoroughfare there are hundreds of shops side by side, now with drawn shutters and heavy bolts. The inhabitants were half of them Turks and half Bulgarians, and there are half a dozen mosques and two or three Bulgarian churches, in one of which there is a curious choir screen of elaborately carved oak with large painted panels, and a correspondingly florid pulpit chair, also more curious than beautiful.

The inhabitants welcomed General Gourko with great joy, and prove themselves daily more and more devoted to the interests of the Russians. I think I have remarked in a previous letter the difference between the natives of the mountains and those of the territory bordering on the Danube. The people in and about Etropol are exceptionally intelligent and enterprising for peasants, and have an air of independence and self-confidence which those of the Danube entirely lack. They are withal finely built, agreeable, and even handsome types of men and women. During the occupation by the Turks nothing was burned or destroyed. When the army first came here all the wine and the money which could be found in the possession of the inhabitants

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were seized and confiscated, and in cases of resistance some natives were killed. The young girls of the town were hidden in the mountains at the approach of the Turkish forces, but the soldiers hunted them out, and ten of the most beautiful were seized and carried away. After a short time nine came back, but the tenth is still missing. Eight of the nine, unwilling to bear the dishonour and disgrace inflicted on them, drowned themselves in the Mali Isker, although the priests absolved them and declared them purified, and did their best to console the poor creatures. As I have heard the story from several different sources, I have no hesitation in believing it.

With this exception, the inhabitants say they suffered little from the Turks. There is no difficulty in finding good quarters among the deserted Turkish houses. I have a large house with a curious balcony overhanging the street all for myself and servants. There is a good stable attached, and the Mali Isker rushes along under the front door. The loft is stored with maize stalks and millet, but there is not enough furniture in the establishment to kindle a fire. In the great open hall of the second story, upon which opens all the chambers, and which looks out upon a courtyard, there are several great dried pools of blood on the mud floor. I try to believe a sheep was killed there, and thank Fortune that I am under a roof.

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CHAPTER III.

THE "ARMY OF RELIEF."

The Turkish Fugitives in Roumelia.—The Filthy Town of Sofia.—Mehemet Ali recalled from Bosnia to assume the Command of "the Relieving Army."—Effects of the Russian Strategy.—Circassian Outrages in Orkanieh.—General Features of the Balkan Campaign.—Shaldonik Height.—Operations of General Rauch and General Dondeville.—The Turkish Positions.—Mountain Bivouacs.—The Cossack Stations.—Traces of a Struggle.—Mountain Scenery.—Transport and Ambulance Difficulties in the Mountains.—Lamentable Condition of the Wounded.—Bulgarian Girls.—Life in Etropol.—Difference between the Bulgarians North and South of the Balkans.—Summary of General Gourko's Progress.—Configuration of the Country.—Engagement between the Turks and Forces under Count Schouvaloff.—With Mehemet Ali.—The Fight in the Orkanieh Pass.—Kamarli Pass.—The Bosnians.—Excellence of the Russian Artillery Practice.—Mehemet Ali deprived of his Command.—Alarm at Sofia.—The Stafford House Fund and the Red Crescent Society.—Self-Mutilation among the Turkish Soldiers.—The Turkish Compassionate Fund and Lady Burdett-Coutts's Agent.—Rumours at Kamarli of the Fall of Plevna.

BEFORE proceeding with the narrative of General Gourko's expedition, furnished by our correspondent accompanying the Russian army, it will be interesting to glance at the position at Sofia, and to see how the operations in the Balkans, and the situation in general, presented themselves to the mind of an observer at the headquarters of Mehemet Ali Pacha. The following letter, as will be observed, precedes by a few days the date of the letters in the previous chapter:—

"MEHEMET ALI'S HEADQUARTERS, SOFIA, *November 21st.*—In riding along the high road from Philippopolis to this dirty and disappointing town, I was astonished to find how general the exodus of the population from all parts threatened by the Russians had become. I had seen the flight of Moslem, Bul-

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garian, and Jewish families from Kezanlik and the valley of the Tundja during July and August, but this bids fair to rival it in numbers, and with the terrible addition to the suffering entailed by the severity of winter, which, in these mountain-shut districts, is excessively keen. The roads are literally blocked with long strings of the arabas of the fugitives, intermingled with the very numerous army transport waggons going to and from the theatre of operations. Many a poor wanderer has no other than summer attire, whilst half-naked children lie ensconced amongst the slender stock of household stores which with them form the contents of the lumbering vehicle. Droves of cattle, flocks of sheep and goats, add to the encumberment of the way. The distress, everywhere apparent, will add greatly to the embarrassment of the Ottoman exchequer, already sufficiently tasked to find the means of paying the inevitable current expenses of this costly war. Tatar Bazardjik was crowded with such fugitives who could find shelter within it. Across the mountains and along the apparently endless plain in which Sofia is situated, the stream coming against one was still stronger as the alarm appeared to be extending, every one evidently fearing that the fall of Plevna, and the consequent outpouring of the marauding and dreaded Cossacks was of imminent probability.

Scarcely a Bulgarian family was to be met with, however, amongst them, the danger spreading amongst the Mohammedan inhabitants alone—at all events for the moment.

The streets of this town, in itself perhaps the filthiest in European Turkey—and rendered still more so by the contrast caused by a spasmodic attempt at a building mania which set in three years since, when it was expected to become a second Wolverton, on Baron Hirsch's partially formed and now abandoned railway—are so crowded with fugitives, with soldiers, on and off duty, sick and convalescent, Jews and Bulgarians in every variety of costume, that locomotion is a matter of grave difficulty. All around in the fields the fugitives are encamped, especially nearest the outlying villages, where a temporary halt is made with the object of resting the animals, and giving time for their

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owners to come to a decision whither to bend their wayworn steps. What is ultimately to become of them no one can foresee. Never was a war in which so much misery has been occasioned, and ruin so widespread and hopeless. Despondency may well be traced on every face, for if Russia is successful, the homes of the fugitives will see them no more. A fresh phase of the war is presented by the reappearance of Mehemet Ali on the scene. He has been hurrying up from Bosnia, where he had scarcely arrived ere he was recalled to occupy the most important post in the power of the Government to bestow.

Some of his troops have arrived with him, but the majority have crossed the Balkans without entering the town, and some newly-formed Albanian battalions have just opportunely been sent to the front also. Supreme efforts are being made to form a sufficient army to contend with any force the besiegers can bring against it. As yet but little artillery has arrived, and the arsenal at Constantinople will have to be liberally drawn upon for the necessary supply, before the arrival of which it seems doubtful if a pitched battle can take place, as the superiority of the enemy in that arm is too well known.

Mehemet Ali has taken up his quarters in a fine house just built by the chief banker in the place. He has work enough suddenly imposed upon him, but appears perfectly at his ease, and capable of the task of organizing the troops he is to command. The majority of the inhabitants, as is well known, are Bulgarians, the Greeks and Jews forming a considerable addition, whilst the Turks are in a minority. The Greeks do not scruple to state their belief that Plevna cannot hold out many days; but I do not find this feeling prevalent in any other quarter.

Ghazi Osman is not likely to surrender whilst a hope remains of outside aid; but Mehemet Ali has yet to prove his capability as a general in circumstances rarely paralleled in history, called upon suddenly to relieve a besieged army surrounded by at least double its numbers, both in troops and artillery, and he himself with merely the nucleus of an army as yet under his command. Unless he is most energeti-

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cally supported at Constantinople, a total and formidable change in the aspect of the war will take place before Christmas. Chevket Pacha left here before Mehemet Ali's arrival for his new post under Reouf Pacha at Shipka. He may there have the opportunity of displaying his prowess in a military command, which is certainly better suited to him than the task of civil government.

It will be seen by the three letters following how completely the unexpected vigour of General Gourko's advance had deranged the plans and dissipated the chances of the army of relief :—

"HEADQUARTERS MEHEMET ALI'S ARMY OUTSIDE ORKANIEH, *November 24th.*—Events are passing rapidly, and ere one can chronicle a particular fact of importance, another arises before which the previous fact sinks into comparative insignificance. The Russians appear to have recovered from their systematic want of energy when fortune throws opportunity in their way, and since their great successes at Dubnik and Teliche a continuous vigorous movement of their large forces is the result. Their strategy has cleared the Plevna defile of every Turkish soldier, whilst the détour to Etrepol is a master stroke, and makes Mehemet Ali's newly-acquired command a most unenviable one. The repulse at Novatchin, and the loss of two guns of the Russian Imperial Guard, are the only gleams of sunshine for the newly-formed army. All the rest is dark and drear, and the fighting of yesterday leaves the Turks forced back within shell reach of their own camp at the mouth of the Kamarli or Orkanieh-Sofia Pass, whilst their hastily thrown-up entrenchments beyond Orkanieh are not calculated to keep the elated Russians at bay if a heavy cannonade is made upon them.

Mehemet Ali must have hoped the Russians would have remained inactive, and, indeed, from the quiet and orderly manner in which everything connected with the formation of the new army has been conducted at Sofia, no one ventured on a contrary opinion. Troops in considerable numbers have

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indeed arrived, and as soon as was practicable have been despatched up to the front. Still, it never entered into the mind of Turkish officials that any other object than the relief of Plevna was by any possibility in view. A formidable offensive movement by the Russians seemed impossible, as they had their work to do to besiege Plevna. These dreams are now dissolved, and the first stroke of alarm appears to have been sounded by the Circassians last night in the little town of Orkanieh, plentifully—only too plentifully for Circassians—occupied by poor defenceless Bulgarians. I did not arrive yesterday until too late to witness the fighting, and could only find a poor lodging for myself and horses. In the course of the evening, desiring to see some medical friends, I ventured into the dark streets, and found their house. Whilst conversing with them, we were told that the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks meant mischief, and were believed to be on the point of attacking an adjoining house. Off we started and found a shutter which had been forced open; a guard of three men happening by great good luck to be passing, two Bashi-Bazouks, armed to the teeth, were discovered with some loot in their hands. This they at once had to abandon, and were taken off. Hardly was this affair at an end before piercing shrieks were heard from a number of female voices, proceeding from another house not far distant. On hastily repairing to it, and hammering at the door, no answer was returned, but the screaming ceased. A rush to the back was suggested and instantly acted upon. Making ourselves known, a door was opened, and intense was the relief of some twenty poor women and children at our opportune arrival, for a band of Circassians were on the point of breaking open the door. Placing them under the protection of the guard, we returned to our homes.

At three in the morning we were again alarmed, but this time by being awakened by a report that a Russian attack was imminent, and we must saddle up and be off instantly. Before doing so, however, a message came from one of our friends to say there was no immediate cause for the alarm, and the remainder of the night was passed by us in peace. Far different, however, was it by the unfortunate Bulgarians

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when no regular troops were quartered upon them. In the hospital next morning two young men and two women, with a child, were brought in suffering from gunshot wounds inflicted by these scoundrels of Circassians in their congenial task of robbing, and far worse, these poor and, for the moment, unprotected people. Throughout the whole night we were assured screams could be heard in all directions as their diabolical work proceeded. A confirmation soon occurred, for at the back of the house in which I remained a great outcry was made, and this in broad daylight. This attempt was frustrated by our medical friends and a soldier who accompanied us. All this looks like a sure presage of disaster, and gives the keynote to alarm. It was most unfortunate that a more numerous guard could not have been spared to counteract the machinations of these ruffians.

SUNDAY, *November 26th.*—During the whole of last night the Turkish troops were engaged in quietly retiring from their positions in the new trenches beyond Orkanieh. Those quartered in the town were also withdrawn, and the Bulgarians were left without protection. Rather than remain liable to be driven out by the army on both sides at any moment, and also to the more terrible danger of prowling Circassians, they would do well to sacrifice their homes and go off in a body to the more sympathizing enemy. Certainly their fate is as hard and bitter as any in this unparalleled war.

KAMARLI CAMP, TOP OF THE PASS, SUNDAY EVENING.—I have ridden up here to hear tidings and send telegrams, and find material enough and to spare. Etropol, too, abandoned, and the heights near this camp crowded with the remains of the six battalions who so gallantly defended themselves against such a numerically formidable enemy for three long days, and at last compelled to beat a retreat, although without the loss of one of their six guns. Another pass, too, gone. Reinforcements need be arriving or they will be too late, and this pass, leading from deserted Orkanieh to much-coveted Sofia, may also be held by the enemy. What is then to follow? Bad weather is at hand; a heavy snow-

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storm will give a few days of grace, and may prove invaluable to the Osmanli.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, ETROPOL, IN THE BALKANS, *December 5th.*—Thus far the Balkan campaign has been a succession of alternating flank movements which, one after the other, have turned the Turkish positions with little loss of life, the success depending in every case more on the muscle and the endurance of the soldiers than on their fighting qualities. The first pause of any considerable length since we left Dolny Dubnik has been made here at Etropol, and we delay here with good reason, because the operations against the defences of the Baba Konak Pass are much more serious and require a great deal more time than any yet undertaken.

The Turkish position is in full sight of Etropol, but the topography of the mountains is so complex and the position so situated that it is difficult to make clear to the reader the plan of the territory it commands, and by which it is approached, without a drawing in detail. It will, however, be easily understood that the Turks occupy the highest peak near the summit of the Pass, to the east of it, a point over 4,000 feet above the sea level, and that as long as they hold this commanding height they prevent any advance along the Sofia road, the only way leading across the mountains which is practicable for wheels. The Turks fortified this height long ago, and, of course, after the occupation of the Pravca Pass and Etropol by General Gourko's army, they concentrated all their troops and artillery near this point. Their withdrawal from their first positions was so hasty, and had so much the appearance of a panic, that it could not have been premeditated. They have been fairly outmanœuvred, and they have found the Russians a much more enterprising enemy than they expected to meet. Etropol was evacuated in the night, and the two tabors which were stationed here retreated, as I have described in a telegram, up the west branch of the Mali Isker to the mountain where they now hold the fortified position. Two or three squadrons of Hussars were sent in pursuit of the enemy as soon as it

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was discovered that they were retreating, and the flight soon became a rout, the way being blocked with broken carts, munitions, and supplies, and when the mountain was reached the larger part of the train was left behind, with a great many head of cattle.

The advance guard of the Hussars consisted of only eight men, who rode up the mountain path with all the spirit and boldness of 800, and cheered and blew the bugle, and skirmished so cleverly with the rear-guard of the Turks, that the latter believed the woods were full of cavalry. The rocky mountain sides gave back multiplied echoes of the victorious cheers, and magnified in the ears of the retreating enemy the sound of the voices of eight men into the hurrah of as many squadrons. The eight kept up the game until they found that they had to handle two tabors, and then one of them went back for reinforcements, and a squadron and a half was sent up, including in its number several buglers.

The first move was to scatter the buglers all along the line, and they sounded the calls from a dozen different points at once, giving all the effect of a very large force, which the friendly echo magnified again, and the woods seemed swarming with men. Thus the farce went on for hours, and the Hussars hunted the Turks fairly into the entrenchments, and then stopped and held the advance post within a half rifle shot of the muzzles of the Turkish guns. This was at the point where General Rauch's position now is, the left flank of the line. The road by which the retreat was made had been a short time previously hastily cut through the forest of beech and birch trees, with no attempt at grading, or even at clearing it of rocks; and consequently it was almost impassable at several points, and at the best only a track of the roughest kind. The summit where the Turkish earthworks are is approached from the east and from the north by two distinct ridges of mountains or great hills, which are separated from each other and from the adjacent heights by deep ravines, through which tumble and rush little torrents a couple of yards wide at the most, but deep down in rocky gorges which can be crossed at only few points. These two ridges are composed of a number of peaks piled one upon another in

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an ascending scale, like a gigantic staircase winding up to the dominating summit. They are covered with a thick growth of deciduous trees, chiefly birch and beech, often of great diameter and very tall, completely concealing the surface of the earth, except where great grey moss-covered limestone ledges crop out and make huge scars on the brown mountain flanks. The road above spoken of follows from Etropol the little stream named on the Austrian map Suhar River, which it crosses in several places, and is evidently an old cart track, by which in winter wood has been brought from the mountains. At the foot of the eastern ridge begins the path cut by the Turks, and it winds up one steep declivity after another, and along the connecting shoulders of the peaks until it reaches the smooth, treeless summit.

On the northern ridge the Russians made use of an old cart track, and took advantage of favourable openings in the trees and even ground among the rocks to mark out a path to the top of this ridge, terminating in the lowest elevation of the great summit, which, although appearing from below a continuous rounded surface, is in reality triple, and two of the knolls, the highest, are occupied by the Turkish earth-works. The placing of the cannon on these ridges near enough to the enemy to be effective was of course a most difficult and laborious task. The caissons were from the first discarded, it having been proved on General Rauch's late mountain march that cannon can be dragged with comparative ease where caissons cannot be moved at all.

The Bulgarians were all assembled, to the number of two hundred, with fifteen or twenty yoke of oxen and buffaloes. Four pairs of cattle were attached to each limber by a stout rope, and in front of the cattle a hundred men or more lay hold of the line, which was provided with breast straps like the tow-line of a canal boat. With this large team of cattle and strong force of men the nine-pounders were slowly but surely dragged up the path, a score of stout fellows at each wheel, and a dozen flourishing whips and yelling at the oxen. The Bulgarians had a cannon all to themselves, and it was amusing enough to notice the pride they took in their task. They crowded upon the rope as many as could put

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their hands to it, pushed the wheels and the limber-box, lifted the muzzle of the piece, and braced up on the axletrees. Those who could find no place to come near the rope, the cattle, or the cannon, took sticks and pushed in between the crowd, contented if they could only touch the brass, or rest their stick on the tire of the wheel. Such a yelling and singing and shouting as there was! The little cattle, belly deep in the mud, floundered along half wild in the midst of the crazy multitude, that showered upon them blows and kicks, and pushed and pulled them about. There was very little unity in the Bulgarian efforts, but they were effective notwithstanding, and their cannon, which probably seemed to them like a great plaything, for they had only looked upon the shining bronze from a distance before, crawled slowly up, tilting and jolting and twisting along over the boulders, and through the pools of knee-deep mud and snow to a Babel of shrieks and shouts. The soldiers, a little jealous of the "Bratoushka"—this term, which is continually applied by the Bulgarians to the Russians, being an affectionate diminutive of "brother," is now in general use among the soldiers to signify "Bulgarian"—did their best to bring up the cannon in military order, singing and hauling like sailors at the braces. They were doubtless a little piqued at being employed in the same task as the natives, whom they naturally enough consider a step below the wearers of the uniform. I heard them discussing the propriety of trusting the precious pieces in the hands of the Bulgarians, and criticizing severely the manner in which they were brought up.

It is a hard climb of three hours from the valley to the position of General Dondeville on the right flank, and it took from thirty-six to forty-eight hours to drag the cannon up the path. It is no wonder that it took so long; it is only astonishing that they were hauled up at all, for I doubt if cannon were ever taken over more difficult ground. Once up there they were placed in the very face of the enemy, at such short range that the sound of the Turkish guns and the whizz and bursting of the shell close at hand are almost simultaneous. From this position the view is very extended,

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taking in the plain of Orkanieh and a great part of the Baba Konak Pass, the guns carrying down into the redoubts near Araba Konak, the summit of the Pass. It is not an agreeable place to study the landscape, for the Turks shoot very well with their Krupp guns, and a single horseman or a group of three or four people on foot, is sure to attract a shell, but it is the only point whence a good idea of the positions on both sides can be gained. The large Turkish redoubt, part of which was taken and lost on the 29th of November, stands just at the "a" of the word "Grevta" on the Austrian map—the name of this height is, by the way, Shaldonik. From here there is a line of five redoubts extending in a south-westerly direction to the chaussée, the last one a finely-constructed square earthwork with a raised central battery, standing just north of Araba Konak, between the point marked on the map as the village or station Araba Konak and the word "Dermente." General Rauch's position may be found on the map about a quarter of an inch north-east of the "a" in "Grevta," and from here the line runs along parallel with this word. General Dondeville's position to as far as the "e" then extends down the irregular ridge to the chaussée, which it crosses just north of and parallel with the word "Dermente," and meets the extreme right, Count Schouvaloff's position, near the words "Baba Konak." The summit of the pass is about 1,500 feet lower than the great Turkish redoubt, and beside the square earthwork there the Turks are building another opposite, on the other side of the road, and the work goes on in spite of the Russian shrapnel. I have referred to the positions on the Austrian map, for that gives the best idea of the situation. As this map was not made by actual survey, but the mountains were only sketched in from a few fixed points which were taken by actual measurement, the conformation of the mountains is quite incorrect.

The Turkish position is on the watershed of the range, but, as I have traced it on the map, this watershed should be further south, or the hills south of it lower and nearer. There are other mistakes in the courses of the rivers which are too complicated to explain. One may ride along from the right

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to the left flank. It is only a few kilomètres, but the route is commanded the whole way by the rifles of the Turkish pickets, and having once passed over the road, I never care to repeat the trip. The outposts and skirmish line on the left are so near the Turks that it seems marvellous that so few men are hit; the cannon there on the second plateau, and those on the lower knoll of the summit, the natural bastion of the Turkish position, and one which they made a grave mistake in yielding, are only 650 yards from the smoke-blackened embrasures of the great redoubt, and volleys of shrapnel are thrown into it with perfect precision; while the Turks, on their side, reply with a spiteful irregularity, sometimes dropping a shell into the soldiers' soup, sometimes cutting down enough fuel to cook dinner with, in unpleasant proximity to the path.

It is interesting to enter these mountain bivouacs, miles away from a village and from supplies, far up among the clouds, which at this season drift along between the peaks, frequently veiling the whole landscape, and drawing a dense curtain of mist between the hostile lines. It is a little world in itself, a camp among the trees here. Fires are blazing on every side; the soldiers have rigged up their shelter tents between the smooth, straight, beech trunks, and have their garments all hung about to dry; there is a continuous musical ring of axes and sabres cutting fuel, only interrupted by the infernal whizz and angry crack of Turkish shells; rifles are stacked in long irregular lines, or are clustered about the large trees; and crowds of soldiers are gathered about the kitchens or busied with the details of their simple toilettes. Some of the bivouacs are continually exposed to rifle-fire; not that they are in sight of the Turkish lines, but the bullets that go over the crest of the hill and graze the earthworks come dropping into the bivouac in the rear, chipping the trees and wounding men and horses. They are not spent bullets either, for they will go through a three-inch sapling, and then stick in a tree beyond. The soldiers in their bivouacs dig great holes in the ground, pitch their tents over them, and then pile the earth and sods up on the side towards the enemy, so they have a

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very good shelter at all times. Fires are also built in little earthworks, for no one likes to have a live bullet in his kitchen, and whenever there is a fusillade nearly every man is in cover. The shells and shrapnel come in, but the men take the risk of these projectiles, and attempt no defence against them. A thin cloud of blue smoke from the fires rises out of the tree tops, drifting away to leeward, and marking exactly where the bivouac is placed, both to the eyes of friends away back in the town, and to the sharp sight of the enemy near at hand. Thus one may see how closely together lie the two armies on the mountain tops.

From below, in the valley, all day long, and even through the night, toils up the rough path a procession of soldiers and Bulgarians, bearing powder and shells, and a long train of pack-horses, laden with provisions and fodder. The Cossack stations on the way are comfortable little camps, where hay, although brought on horseback for miles, is stacked in abundance, and the cooking seems to be continually going on. Here the soldier, panting from the exertion of the steep ascent, pauses to take breath and to have a chat near the fire. When the snow covered the ground the picturesqueness of the mountain bivouacs was without parallel. The tree trunks came out sharply with their deep grey colour against the pure white, and every figure was in distinct silhouette. Now, the grey overcoats of the soldiers harmonize exactly with the colours of the carpet of dead leaves, and it is difficult to distinguish the men from the ground they lie on. In the snow, too, was written more plainly than with words, the history of the movements of each man in the skirmish line. One could follow every step of the advance of the Russians as they drove the Turks from tree to tree upon the open summit, and mark just where each soldier sought shelter—the means he took to get nearer the enemy; and one could even judge accurately the state of the soldier's mind as he dodged from tree to tree, whether he was reckless or cautious, enterprising or timid. The tracks of the Russian boots followed up the prints of the Turkish moccassins, just as one finds in the freshly-fallen snow in the country the track of a cat following the trail of a bird as

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t goes from bush to bush in the garden, and then a few feathers and a drop or two of blood, which marks distinctly where the prey was taken. Pink stains on the white ground among the trees on the mountain were only too eloquent, and here and there a pool of blood, that had flowed warm and melted the snow in a dark red spot, showed where men had been hit hard, and the impression of the bodies where they fell, the tracks of the comrades who came to carry them away—all was there, unmistakably, even too plainly legible. The Turkish dead, stripped by their friends for the ragged woollen clothes they wore, lay nearly naked on the spot where they had fallen, their bare legs and arms half buried in the snow, the ghastly spectacle all the more impressive in the cruel cold, and the desolate landscape. Nothing in all the previous battles of the war which I have yet seen moved me half as much as the sights of a short hour on the mountain the afternoon of the attack, capture, and final surrender again of the redoubt on the summit. Although I arrived only just before the close of the affair, the whole history of the series of sharp skirmish fights that led up to it, and the complete sequel of the encounter, was put before me by the silent testimony of the snow, more vividly and more impressively than if I had been with the men who did the work, for there was nothing to distract the attention from the awful aspect of the scene, and without the excitement of the fight I could contemplate at leisure the illustrated history of it, printed with photographic accuracy on the fresh snow. The knowledge that almost within reach lay wounded men on the bleak knoll, sure to be massacred when the rapidly-approaching darkness fell full upon the mountain, became a torture, as the icy wind drove the storm clouds across the peaks, and began to whirl the light snow, and the strong and unharmed began to suffer from the cold in the cheerless bivouac. I afterwards learned that every man who fell in the retreat down the mountain was murdered by the enemy during the long night that followed, so that our misgivings as to their fate were not without full foundation. The majestic solemnity of the mountain scenery; the awful mystery of the wild forest;

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the cold, the snow, and the driving mist; the freshly wounded and the dead in the snow close by; the living who were telling the story of the fight with their rifles still hot in their hands—these were surroundings to make one realize the full extent of the horrors of the war in the mountains, and I never care to repeat the experience of that night in the bivouac.

Of course, it was impossible to bring the ambulances anywhere near the scene of action, so every wounded man who could not drag himself down had to be lifted on a stretcher from rock to rock for four long miles to the first hospita lstation. From here the next day the wounded were carried in the springless country carts still further to the rear. The difficulties of transport are so great that probably a large proportion of the wounded men die before they reach the hospital camps in Roumania. It is a journey of nearly two weeks from here to Simnitza, and the cold and wet, the jolting of the waggon, and the constrained position would try the endurance of a man who was whole and well. To be wounded near the enemy is sure death, and any severely hurt soldier who escapes this fate is fortunate if he survives the sufferings of the journey to the hospitals. The doctors say that the wounded have more to fear from the transport than from their wounds; and although every effort is made to keep them strong and healthy by providing them with plenty of food, a delay on the road will often cause a great deal of suffering from want of supplies. There has lately arrived to this army a train of new ambulance transports, neatly covered and drawn by fresh, well-fed horses. The carts are without springs, but are much more spacious than any I have seen before; they are provided also with something like a swinging bed, so they can carry two men below and two above. One great need in the transport of the wounded is an escort of nurses of sufficient number to care properly for the helpless men. I have never yet seen a train of wounded so provided, and although I have no accurate information as to the proportion of surgeons to soldiers in the Russian army, I doubt very much if it be more than one to forty or fifty. The experience of other nations has shown

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that double this proportion is none too great for all the exigencies of active warfare, and it is evident that in a war like the present one there is great need of an uncommonly large corps of surgeons.

I have left my story of the bivouac on the mountain to speak of the wounded and their fate, for at the time I could not but reflect on the future sufferings of those who were already tortured by painful wounds, as they dragged themselves down through the snow that evening toward the distant ambulance. Some were assisted on the road by their comrades, some bravely struggled along alone, and some lay motionless on the stretchers, and were lifted down with great toil. Wet and cold, exhausted and wounded as they were, I did not hear a complaint or a groan, although their faces often bore witness to intense pain and increasing weakness. They had patiently marched along the rough and muddy valley road during the night, they had patiently clambered up the steep mountain side, and, weary and hungry, they had assaulted and taken a redoubt, and now with the same heroic patience they bore the pain and the terrible weakness without a word. Volumes could not do justice to their devotion and their heroism. That night the clouds gathered, and plentiful rain fell, melting the snow, and converting every path into a torrent of muddy water. By daylight the story written in the snow was washed away, and nothing remained but the Turkish dead now lying on a bed of wet leaves, and a few blood-stained rags strewn along the path.

When I came down from the mountain in early morning the last wounded man had been cared for, and as I rode back to Etropol I met the carts coming to carry the wounded away. At Etropol one has little idea of what is passing in the mountains. All day and night we hear the echoes of the cannonade sounding in the ravines, and now and then the dull roll of a fusillade of brief duration comes down through the still air, audible above the rattle of the carts on the pavement, or the clatter of horses' feet on the bridges. We are within rifle-shot almost of the positions, and are to all intents as far from the battle as at Bucharest. No wounded

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men are seen in the streets; there is no hurrying of troops, or rapid movements of artillery. Once in a while a Cossack came clattering in with a despatch, or a general passes with a small suite; but the occupations here are leisurely and peaceful. The Bulgarians gather in crowds at the corners of the narrow streets, and keep up an animated discussion; the girls—and very pretty ones too—dressed in their simple costume of a scanty robe with long sleeves and open neck, bound to the waist by a broad belt of square links of chased silver, their arms loaded with heavy silver bracelets, their necks hidden by chains of yellow, red, and green glass beads, and their heads enveloped in a dark-coloured handkerchief that falls down the back, every evening promenade down to the fountain with their water jugs, so coquettishly dressed for the occasion, and with such a conscious air, that one sees at once that they are parading a little before the handsome hussars in red-jackets all covered with cord and braid. The Turks carried away with them all the richest citizens and the priests, so we have not the society of the most influential people of the town. Of the 12,000 inhabitants there are probably not over 2,000 here now, and these are mostly the poor people who either were unable to flee or were hidden at the time of the evacuation. Not one of the Turkish citizens remained, and, judging from the great number of deserted dwellings and empty shops they must have been in the majority, and the most active part of the population. One or two Bulgarian shops have opened and are doing a lively business in "dry goods" and tobacco, but it is impossible to obtain at any price sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate, candles, paper, or, indeed, any of the like luxuries of life. The sugar famine is sometimes very severe and of long duration. There are no sutlers here, the one enterprising Jew who found his way thus far having sold out at quadruple prices every ounce of his load, even to the last sheet of wrapping paper. There is plenty of butter, milk, fresh meat, and black bread, and a great supply of forage in the valley.

I have frequently alluded to the difference between the Bulgarian of the Balkans and the Bulgarian of the territory near

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the Danube. In Etropol they have done notable service on various occasions, and the young men of the town have formed a small volunteer company, which goes out into the mountains and lends a hand when needed. The volunteers are armed with two or three kinds of Turkish rifles besides the two Russian rifles, and some of them wear Russian overcoats and boots; but the larger part are dressed in full Bulgarian costume, with broad red sash stuck full of knives and pistols, with sheepskin caps and raw hide mocassins. One smart young fellow I noticed had wound among the handles of his brass-mounted pistols and long yataghan in his red sash, a richly embroidered cloth, which, with his arsenal of weapons, gave him quite the air of a theatre brigand. If the volunteers are brave in proportion to their warlike appearance they will do something worth recording.

+ ORKANIEH, *Dec. 9th.*—General Gourko's campaign up to this date has been a series of very interesting and cleverly executed movements, which have enabled him to advance without serious check southward to Baba Konak, within a day's ride of Sofia, and even to throw part of his force across the Balkans into the valley near Slatica. The loss has been only about 500 all counted, and thus far it may be called a muscular campaign, for in almost every case success has been won by flank movements, which depended entirely on the endurance of the soldiers.

General Gourko has handled his forces with as much precision as if they were manœuvring on the parade ground instead of in a wild mountainous region, where there are no roads, and where every kilomètre counts more than five on the plain, for each step in advance among the mountains is gained only by hard climbing and great fatigue.

I have already described the march of General Rauch's column to outflank the enemy at the Pravca Pass. This history of wonderful pluck and endurance is repeated on a less important scale almost every day. Heights are climbed, ravines are crossed, and dense forests penetrated by the troops with artillery, that seemed to the Turks, and with reason, to be the impregnable natural bulwarks of their chosen positions.

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They left these points unguarded because apparently inaccessible, and the Russians have found there just the footholds needed to grapple with the enemy or to threaten him out of his strongholds.

It is not strange that an army with so little mobility as the Turkish should find itself puzzled to deal with an energetic, active, hostile force, even where it fights on its own ground, and leisurely chooses its definitive positions. The odds are very much against the side which has insufficient and cumbersome transport, and the Turks have experienced the evil of their transport system in every retreat they have made before General Gourko's advance; for they have left a large part of it in the hands of the Russians. It was, of course, expected that the great resistance would be met at Baba Konak, for the Sofia road is the only highway crossing the mountains between the Ganci Pass and Shipka which is practicable for wheels in winter months. To cross the Balkans was not a very difficult matter. Nearly ten days ago the regiment which drove the Turks from their earthworks on the summit of the Slatica Pass debouched into the valley and occupied the village of Klisekoi, so near the road leading to Kezanlik as to be able to cut off the reinforcements sent from the Shipka army towards Sofia. Other passes not marked on the map are also open or easily forced, but none of these roads permit the passage of artillery and transport, and Baba Konak always remains the key to the country beyond, to Sofia on the west, and Slatica and Shipka on the east.

After the occupation of Pravca the Turks remained in force for two days at Orkanieh and at Vracesi, a village at the entrance of the Pass, which they had fortified with a large and complete line of earthworks extending into the plain in front as far as Orkanieh. When Etropol fell into General Gourko's hands these defences of the entrance to the Pass became immediately untenable, for Etropol lies within half a dozen miles from the road behind Vracesi, and the Russians threatened to intercept the retreat from the latter place. Hence the Turks withdrew precipitately to the summit of the Pass into their forts there. Thus, without anything more serious than skirmishes, General Gourko drove his enemy

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into their final positions and proceeded to establish himself at once, parallel to his line of offence along the adjacent mountain tops. The commanding point of the Turkish position is the highest peak of the watershed, about three miles east of the summit of the Pass, the largest redoubt occupying a point marked on the Austrian map as Griota. The line runs from here south-west to the highest point of the Pass, just above the baiting station called Araba Konak, and is held by four earthworks. Between the road and the great redoubt and the two earthworks west of the Pass, two ridges lead up to the Turkish position from the north, and General Rauch established himself on the ridge to the east, while General Dondeville immediately occupied the other. Both joined their summits to the shoulders of the dominant peak, and even one part of this peak, the smaller of the three elevations which compose it, and which was debatable ground at the time of the attack on the earthwork described in my last telegram, has been seized by the Russians, and cannon planted there within half range of the great redoubt. General Dondeville occupies the line of heights parallel with the enemy's line, as far west as the precipitous descent, three kilomètres from the summit of the Pass. Then the line turns north-west to the road, which it crosses to join that held by Count Schouvaloff on the opposite ridge. Several batteries of nine-pounders have been placed in position along the Russian line, and cannonade the enemy's works almost continuously. General Rauch, whose guns are within 650 yards of the great redoubt, throws shrapnel alone.

The difficulties of bringing heavy pieces up the rough mountain paths, at the best scarcely practicable for horsemen, were overcome only by great energy and the severest toil. It is impossible to render full justice to the condition of these paths, gullied by torrents of mud and water, paved with loose boulders and slippery ledges, and mounting in zig-zags often at an angle of 45 degrees. Four yoke of cattle, and from 150 to 200 men to the gun, were occupied two days and nights in making the ascent. The caissons have to be left in the valley, and the ammunition is brought up by hand, 200 or 300 Bulgarians being employed in this work. The prevalence

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of clouds, which frequently cover the mountains with a chill, impenetrable mist, makes bivouacs behind the lines anything but comfortable. Nevertheless, drenching vapour is preferable to the bullets and shells which fall into the camps whenever the air is clear enough to permit the enemy to see the low mines of entrenchments within half range of their rifles.

The Turks appear to have but fifteen guns in position—less than half the number mounted by the Russians, and of much smaller calibre. They work their guns remarkably well. Except the attack on the great redoubt, described in my last despatch, there has been but one engagement between the infantry, and that was fought on the 3rd instant, at Count Schouvaloff's position, west of the road. The Russian line here is so situated that it commands Araba Konak, but at the same time does not occupy the highest point of the ridge.

The Turks began demonstrations on the day mentioned from two camps near the Araba Konak earthworks, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, having meanwhile sent a strong detachment around behind the mountain that dominates the Russian right. This detachment shortly after appeared on the crest of the mountain, and charged in solid lines against the Russian sharpshooters, who were, by some strange negligence, not intrenched. Count Schouvaloff had six guns planted on the highest point of his position, and the Turks came so near that he sent volleys of shrapnel into the solid masses with the greatest effect, causing them to break and scatter, but still they advanced with the cry of "Allah!" "Allah!" which was repeated by those in the camps all along the line, evidently to encourage the attack and to give the impression of great numbers. On they came within pistol-shot of the Russians, facing the staggering volleys from the Berdans and showers of shrapnel. Now they were so near the guns that those who were watching the fight from General Dondeville's batteries believed the pieces were taken; but the charging lines were seen to melt away and stream backward down the slope, and the first fierce attack was repulsed.

Again and again they assaulted with the same desperation. The cannon were worked so quickly that five out of the six

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became heated and unserviceable, and there was no water for the sponges. The anxious spectators on the opposite crests, unable to render assistance, believed the day was lost, when the hot cannonade tumbled down to sullen reports from a single gun, and the lines threw themselves against the very bayonets of the defenders of the ridge, with the cry of "Allah!" "Allah!" and the impetuous rush; but every time they came up they soon broke and retreated, falling by hundreds, while they were running back down the slope, and leaving at the close of the day when they repeated the attempt to break the Russian lines, the mountain literally black with dead and wounded.

The Turks had a force variously estimated at from ten to twenty tabors. Prisoners report that one thousand three hundred men were *hors de combat*, including one Pacha and two colonels. Count Schouvaloff held his line with two battalions of the Moskovisky Regiment, and a small detachment of the tirailleurs of her Majesty the Empress. The Russian loss was about three hundred.

The attack was renewed again in the morning, but reinforcements had come up to the Russians, and the assault was not kept up long. Since that time both lines have entrenched, and are not over five hundred paces apart, conversation and the noise of men working being distinctly audible across the interval.

The situation here is at the date of writing as I have described. All forward movements have stopped, and it is impossible to predict when the next advance will be made. The Turks still occupy Lutakova, a town at the base of the mountains west of Orkanieh, and it is known that they are in force in the mountains there. I believe the cause of the check in the advance may be traced, not so much to the fact that the Turks have very good positions, and defend them with energy and skill, but to the probable hesitation on the part of the generals to use the Guard as they would like. The great redoubt was once occupied, and could have been held if the attack had been supported; and I do not think I am mistaken in declaring that, with a loss of one thousand to one thousand five hundred men, the Turkish position could have been

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carried by assault at any well-chosen hour during the past week. From the caution and deliberation which mark every movement, it is presumable that General Gourko has not complete freedom of action, but is entrusted with the chosen troops on the condition that he confines the losses to the lowest possible percentage.

If there be anything to criticize in the campaign so successfully begun, and so interesting in manœuvres, it is the delays, which result, I am sure, from unwillingness to sacrifice men, even when a great loss of life at present would be a saving in the future.

From all that can be learned from prisoners and deserters, the condition of the Turkish troops is terrible. The stories of the sufferings from cold all agree, and the appearance of the men who come through the lines corroborates these statements in every respect. There have been yet no indications of a great force being opposed to General Gourko. It is probably not over thirty tabors, part of which have come from Shipka. As the weather grows colder, the desertions from the Turkish force rapidly increase, and those who come into the Russian lines form probably but a small proportion of those who leave the ranks.

In regard to the state of affairs at Sofia, it is reported that the inhabitants are leaving the city, fearing the approach of the Russians. It is well known that the great mass of the Turkish sick and wounded are assembled there, and that typhus is raging. The weather in the Balkans has been for some days rainy, with the thermometer almost down to freezing point; and at this date there are no signs of the clearing of the storm, which is not violent, but intermittent. The earth in this region is not so soft and rich as that in the vicinity of Plevna, and the rain does not so quickly make the roads impassable. The road is in good condition. Orkanieh was the market-town of this region. There was the Kaimakan, and this was the centre of trade and local government. It counted, perhaps, fifteen thousand inhabitants, and has a great many large and commodious public buildings. Between the Turks and the Russians it has fared badly, a large number of houses having been burned by both parties. The great bazaar is now

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deserted, and empty shops with broken windows and shattered doors show where a short time ago business was conducted. There are many Bulgarian inhabitants now in the town, and refugees are returning every day. Provisions of all sorts are in abundance, and at Vracesi, close by, there are large stores of captured Turkish clothing and rations, enough to feed and clothe thousands of the natives through the winter months.

In the following letter we return to the Army of Relief, and learn how the campaign was regarded from the Turkish side :—

"HEADQUARTERS OF MEHEMET ALI, KAMARLI, *December 3rd (Morning)*.—The Russians have shown such unwonted energy in attack during the critical period, for the Turks, consequent upon their Army of Relief being in an inchoate state, that more than once Mehemet Ali's position has been in extreme jeopardy. It is not too much to say that if the attempt to carry the highest redoubt on the 29th ult. had been made with another battalion, it might have been successful, having regard to the Turkish inferiority of force. The result would have been the retreat of the newly-formed army, with consequences of transcendent importance to the Empire. The attack was well planned, and as bravely carried out as repulsed. With the advantage of their important newly-acquired positions of Etropol, so inconsiderately abandoned by Mustapha Pacha, the Russians, marching from there on the morning of the 28th, appeared on the crest of a chain of mountains running almost parallel with the Turkish redoubts, six in number, which crowned the summits of a high range of the Balkans. These redoubts are at right angles with the main road leading to Orkanieh, one of them, the most westerly, being across the road, the remaining five being thrown up on each ascending peak, the last towering over all, as well as the above-mentioned ridge, at an elevation of upwards of five thousand feet above the sea.

Descending the slopes of the ridge, the Russians encountered no resistance until they reached a ravine clothed with wood, the wintry aspect of which afforded scant cover to either

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side. Here the Turks opened fire, but were soon driven out by the superior attacking force. The day being now far advanced, the enemy bivouacked in the wood, the snow covering the ground and rendering the night a hard one for the unfortunate soldiery. At the same time that this advance was made, Chakir Pacha's position at the Orkanieh end of the pass was attacked, and finding his line of retreat in jeopardy, Mehemet Ali ordered him to fall back up the road to effect a junction at the camp. This was successfully carried out during the whole night, and it forms one of the most curious episodes of the war. How the Russian General could have overlooked the probability of this retirement is a mystery. The noise of the creaking and groaning bullock-waggons must have distinctly reached his ear, and yet not even a company was sent down the ravine which the road through the pass crosses, to cause confusion in the endless stream of vehicles and crowds of laden animals intermixed with the long array of horse artillery. One stoppage of the narrow way, and the alarm which could so easily have been occasioned would have gone far towards giving the Russians the victory on the ensuing morning. With wonderful good luck, however, Chakir Pacha managed to bring every man and gun and all his stores safely to headquarters.

On the morning of the 29th, a drifting mist hung over the mountains, rendering it no easy matter for the Russians to find their way to the point to be attacked, viz., the highest of the redoubts. With the aid of a couple of guns which were drawn up to the ridge the preceding day, and the fire of which gave them a clue to the required direction, the ascent was commenced over the frozen snow. Now and then the clouds lifted, to the advantage of both sides. All this time the Turkish artillery was playing on the assailants as they came out from the cover given by the undulating character of the ground. The battery in the grand redoubt was busily engaged in firing upon the two Russian guns which were placed much below them, but which, from faulty aim, they could never succeed in silencing. The enemy continued to advance, notwithstanding the heavy fire to which they were exposed, until within a couple of hundred

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yards of the redoubt, when a determined rush was made, and several gained a footing at its base. One brave fellow climbed up the steep earthwork, and leaping on to the parapet was shot down at the moment of doing so. A tremendous fire met the assailants, whose weakened ranks were unsupported, and just as everything depended upon their having ample reserves to bring up, the Turks made a rush out of the redoubt, and drove the foremost back at the point of the bayonet. The descending tide carried dismay into the remainder of the advancing column, the retreat had to be sounded, and the day was lost. Six Russian battalions were engaged in the attack.

Great was the relief of Mehemet Ali at the result of the day's fighting. Strong reinforcements had just arrived at the very moment when fortune looked its blackest for him. He openly declared that had the battle been lost he could not have answered for the consequences. Even as it is, his position is far from secure. His left flank is somewhat exposed, and yesterday a strong reconnaissance was made by the enemy. Although easily driven back by a mass of troops which, through the isolated nature of the attack, could be brought against them, still it became more apparent that the position might stand a fair chance of being turned. This (Monday) morning, as I write, an attack has been commenced on the above point, and is increasing every moment. I must leave off to witness it. Six fresh battalions are to be seen marching up from Sofia. Seldom have troops been more welcome to a General.

« KAMARLI PASS, *December 5th.*—The Turks have succeeded in again repelling a well-directed Russian attack, but with losses which will doubtlessly officially be stated as comparatively insignificant, but which in reality exceeded four hundred. The most annoying part to a General of such real talent as Mehemet Ali, is that at least two-thirds of this loss could have been prevented by his engineers obeying his commands, which were that entrenchments were to have been made in advance of his western redoubt, the only one he has at present across the Orkanieh road, on the left of

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his main position. Through the negligence of the officer whose duty it was to have taken the matter in hand, nothing was done, and, as a matter of course, on Sunday night General Gourko quietly sent up four guns within a few hundred yards of this redoubt, and whilst every one in camp was tranquilly taking his last quarter of an hour's sleep we were rudely awakened by most unwelcome missiles. By some wonderful good luck, however, two battalions fresh from Bosnia, which I had seen arrive the previous night, happened to be sent to the left to take up their temporary quarters, pending the decision as to where they would be of most service.

Little enough rest did these really excellent soldiers obtain, for as Monday's dawn appeared they received their Kamarli baptism of fire, and were called upon to face the advancing enemy. Shell after shell fell among them, but utterly disregarding this, they flew to the attack with their customary fierceness, and a desperate fight ensued in the wooded ground before them. The Turkish batteries nearest the wood operated with effect, but unfortunately they were only supported by a couple of battalions of Mustaphas, which did not share the enthusiasm of the Bosnians, and thereby rendered the position of affairs by no means what might have been anticipated. Mehemet Ali was in the next battery across the road, having hurriedly left his tent to see what the alarm was about, and personally directed the whole affair. He himself was shelled by the Russian batteries on the ridge before him, but never flinched, and remained during the greater part of the day quietly watching the movements of his troops, and giving directions which ultimately secured what may be called a victory, but a dear one. The brunt of the fight was certainly on the Bosnians, and, almost unsupported, they bore themselves admirably.

The practice of the Turkish artillery here is decidedly inferior to what I witnessed at Shipka, and that of the Russians is terribly accurate. In the two batteries on the Turkish left at least twenty men were killed outright, besides which a considerable number were wounded, and one gun was completely disabled. The scene in the batteries which I visited

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immediately the fire slackened was sickening. The killed were horribly disfigured, several being blackened with the fire of the shells. The batteries, too, had been much knocked about. The parapets were unfortunately too low, and but little shelter was afforded to the unfortunate defenders.

To return, however, to the scene of fighting in the wood. Backwards and forwards the line of rifle-fire swayed, as each attacking or repelling party gained the upper hand, and incessant were the discharges rattling along the irregular line. The fight lasted until late in the afternoon, when the Russians, evidently fearing that with the approaching twilight their guns might be in jeopardy, withdrew them, but still retained firm hold of some of the ground they had succeeded in gaining. The Bosnians kept up a continuous fire with their advanced posts, and so the day closed. These troops keep up the savage custom of decapitating their enemies. This was done on the present occasion, much to the disgust of Mehemet Ali, who immediately on hearing of it gave orders for its discontinuance under the heaviest penalty. It is to be hoped that such ghastly practices will be discontinued in future.

The Russians succeeded in rendering the headquarters' camp untenable by the General and his staff, shells dropping about in all directions during the day, and through the doubtful wisdom of the officer in charge of the redoubt before it in drawing the enemy's fire, the position of every one whose duty compelled him to remain was one of unnecessary danger. Instead of ceasing a useless fire, he was constantly irritating the Russians into a six-fold activity, and it was not until two the following morning that anybody could rest in peace. Mehemet Ali was urgently requested to pitch his tent in a less dangerous spot, and, to the relief of all, he complied. His unfortunate telegraphists had a most unpleasant duty of it, and at the first opportune moment disappeared down the hill, instruments and all, and sought and obtained relief from further anxiety in a safe retreat.

As the clouds lift, an artillery duel is kept up, slight loss, however, being inflicted on the Turkish side, and, from all that appears, on the Russian also. Reinforcements are

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rapidly arriving, and the golden opportunity which the Russians have had seems likely to be lost by their supineness.

Mehemet's policy of caution appears not to have been approved of at Constantinople; probably because it was seen to be accompanied by the successive occupation by General Gourko's forces of strategical points of the utmost importance, while something like a panic was already observable among the Mussulman inhabitants of Sofia. He was accordingly deprived of his trust, and the Army of the Balkans placed under the command of Chakir Pacha. The following letter from the Turkish side refers to this incident:—

"KAMARLI PASS, *December* 10*th*.—Another change in the chief command of one of the Sultan's armies in the field, and this with the same General and under parallel circumstances as on the last occasion, when he was in possession of the highest post. Mehemet Ali's deposition is most inopportune. He had just been rewarded for his intense and ceaseless labours in giving a real organization to the newly-formed army, when another officer is appointed to take his place, and for no other reason than the exercise by him of that caution which, in any other country, would merit praise from those capable of appreciating it. One must be well acquainted with Turkey before it is possible to understand how such a change can be made by the chief military authorities of the capital. Every general has his party, and the real battles of the war appear to be decided in the Seraskierate as the partisans of each gain the upper hand in the councils of the Sultan. Favouritism takes the place of merit from the appointment of a Mushir down to the nomination of a cadet. The removal of a general at the moment when every nerve should be strained to save the country is a crime, and its authors deserve punishment. Its effects will soon be felt if Plevna falls, as fall it must, unless something immediately can be done to draw away a large portion of the Russian hosts eagerly watching for the hoisting of the white flag by the sorely-beleaguered Ghazi. His losses daily from exposure

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alone (it being known that his men have never received winter clothing) in this severe weather must be exceedingly heavy, especially with the short rations they must now be receiving.

It is generally believed by the foreign military men now present with Mehemet Ali's army that the heights of Kamarli cannot be long held against the full force of the bulk of the Russian army before Plevna, and that, concurrently with its fall (unless the Turkish troops are reinforced to double their present strength, which may be roughly taken at 30,000 men), the road to Sofia will, in consequence, have to be left open to the invaders, and that city be compelled to surrender at discretion, whilst the Turkish army is compelled to fall back towards the east, and hold the pass before Ichteman. The utmost anxiety is felt in Sofia at the prospect of its falling into Russian hands. For several days all the better class have been leaving, and long files of vehicles of every imaginable description, filled with Turkish families in picturesque attire, intermingled with Greeks and Bulgarians, and strings of heavily-laden pack-horses, can be seen quitting the apparently doomed city eastwards towards Philippopolis, Adrianople, and the capital, or southwards to Salonica and the coast. Houses can, consequently, be had for the asking, and the hospital accommodation accorded to the English surgeons is unlimited.

The administrators of the Stafford House Society, Messrs. Pratt and Cullen, are energetically carrying out the instructions of Mr. Barrington Kennett, who is directing its affairs from Constantinople, and at the same time giving his aid and the benefit of his counsel to the Red Crescent Society. The latter, however, being a purely Turkish or Levantine association, stands in need of some such guiding hand to enable its large funds to be distributed in such manner as to be of the greatest service. It has done much good near the front, where the English surgeons attached to it vie with their foreign brethren in attention to the wounded taken to their ambulance, placed somewhat too conveniently near the enemy's range. The other day, on my way up to the heights, whilst the Russians were shelling the redoubt somewhat heavily, I looked into the tents where the Red Crescent was flying in

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the cutting breeze to see what was doing. Some terrible cases, fresh from the front, were being brought down, to which two French surgeons, Drs. Bazy, of Toulouse, and Manoury, of Orleans, were giving all the immediate attention possible, when a heavy shell fell twenty yards off, burying itself in the earth, but, happily, not exploding. I had just been invited to look at the case of a man who had been shot through the lungs, and was asked to hold a lucifer to the aperture to prove that breathing took place through it, as it did, sure enough, to the extent of blowing out the match. That very morning no fewer than twelve men came in with finger wounds, the forefinger of the right hand being generally that which was shot. These cases received scant sympathy from the busy surgeons, who very openly gave their opinion as to the manner in which the wounds were inflicted. The increase in this system of attempt to become invalided has become so great that Mehemet Ali has ordered seven of the soldiers who had only too evidently pulled the trigger with their own feet, to be shot in the presence of their battalions, and this sentence has just been carried out.

Referring to the ambulance work, reminds me of the great amount of good the English societies—the National Aid and Stafford House—are doing to the cause of humanity. Both these admirably managed institutions are models of their kind, and, together with the indefatigable Lady Strangford, who flies her flag over the Bulgarian schools in the heart of Sofia, scorning to beat a retreat, merit support from every one anxious to mitigate suffering. Lady Burdett-Coutts, in her customary practical manner, is taking the deepest interest in watching that her Turkish Compassionate Fund is being wisely administered. Her active agent, Mr. Masters, whose good-humoured face beams with satisfaction as he sees that a couple of thousand of the poorest refugees are fed daily, is the right man in the right place in Sofia. The distress everywhere apparent is painful enough. For many a mile along the highways the graves of those who have died by the roadside—small ones being far the most numerous—are never absent from sight. The weather is becoming intensely severe, and the mortality will greatly increase.

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SOFIA, *December 11th.*—Rumours are beginning to circulate that Plevna has fallen. If the news be true, it ought to awaken the Sultan and his advisers to the importance of making peace whilst there is yet time. Let the Pass of Kamarli fall into Russian hands, and the Czar's demands will be hard indeed.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE TURKISH DEFENCE OF ERZEROUM.

Erzeroum summoned to Surrender.—Evasive Reply of Mukhtar Pacha.—Anxiety in the City.—Description of the Defences.—Attacks on the Forts.—Capture and Recapture of Fort Azizieh.—Renewed Attacks.—Descriptions of the Troops on the Ramparts.—The Grand Duke Michael and the Turkish Prisoners.—Difficulty of forwarding News.—The "Last Moukhir in Erzeroum."—Another Summons to Surrender.—News from Kars.—The Bashi-Bazouks and the Shopkeepers.—The False News published in Constantinople.—Mukhtar Pacha's Tactics.—Prospects of the Defence of Erzeroum.—A Fugitive from Kars.—Spies within the Town.—Case of Captain Temayeff.—An Interview with Mukhtar Pacha.—Arrival of the Caravan from Persia.—Change of Quarters.—Muhir Ali and his "Black Hats."—Sir Arnold Kemball.—A Levy of "Contributions."—An Armenian Village.—A Visit to the Chief Inhabitant.—Polyglot Conversation.—The Village of Illidge.—The Turkish Sick and Wounded.

WHILE the advance of General Gourko across the Balkans is temporarily suspended—the Russian and Turkish armies being both engaged in fortifying their positions in the neighbourhood of Orkanieh—and the Army of Investment is still expecting the crowning incident of the long protracted struggle, we have an opportunity of glancing at affairs in Asia.

The fall of Kars on the 17-18 November has been fully described by writers whose letters are included in the previous

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volume of the "Daily News' War Correspondence." Brief particulars have also been given in the same volume of the hasty pursuit of Mukhtar Pacha's forces in the direction of Erzeroum by General Heimann, who, having been joined by General Tergukasoff, attacked the outworks east of Erzeroum on the 4th of November, and captured the position of Deve-Boyun, which had been regarded as almost impregnable. This brilliant affair was followed up by a further attack on the forts which being only partly successful the Russians found it prudent to retire. A second attack immediately afterwards having been wholly unsuccessful and attended with serious loss, the operations of General Heimann were suspended in the expectation of reinforcements. The defenders of Erzeroum, having had time to recover from the panic consequent on the precipitate retreat of Mukhtar Pacha, had probably now convinced the Russian generals that the city would not be captured without a regular investment, or at least without a considerable increase in the number of their troops; but the heavy falls of snow contributed to the causes of the inaction of the Russians.

The following letters from a correspondent at Erzeroum describe in full detail incidents of the defence of the city against these attacks:—

□ ERZEROUM, *November 10th.*—In my last letter I spoke of an attack as imminent. I did not think it was so near. This morning, at half-past three o'clock, I was roused by the mingled uproar of musketry and artillery. People were running wildly about, and battalions marching to the ramparts cheered at every fifty yards of the way. The crest of the Top Dagh was all aflame with flashing musketry as I reached the flat earth-terrace of my lodging; and beyond came the wild glare of cannon. It was evident that the expected hostilities had commenced.

Some of the older inhabitants of Erzeroum may remember the fighting in 1829. For the great bulk of the population an

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enemy's fire was a new experience. Still, in view of the circumstances, the steady behaviour of the people was remarkable. Yesterday the Russians sent in a flag of truce asking Mukhtar Pacha to surrender. The General replied that he could not give an immediate answer, requiring time to communicate with Constantinople. I don't believe he ever for a moment entertained the idea of surrendering. I consider he rather wanted to gain a few more hours to get his somewhat disorganized forces into better fighting order. Whether he communicated with Stamboul or not, I don't know; but we were told here that fight to the last was determined on; and, accordingly, a marvellously great train of waggons and ox-carts went off straightway from the town. Of course we couldn't have any idea when the enemy meant hostilities. The townspeople showed their appreciation of its imminence by immediately shutting up their shops, after previously removing all their portable goods to a place of safety.

We had not to wait long. In company with some timid Armenians, I sat up, waiting the coming event. Some of them cursed the Russians, many the Turks; and most were of opinion that the situation was not to be borne. Some began at last to doubt the reality of the entire affair, when the situation I have described above suddenly arrived. In the particular circle in which I move, I was at once endued with prophetic attributes. I had been to see the General-in-Chief that evening, and had learned from him how matters stood. I told the people around me that I believed an attack was immediately to be expected, and it came to pass. Men half-dressed, and women with children in their arms, came crowding into my room. Knock after knock announced fresh arrivals, and at length I presided over a numerous levée. The people, I suppose, believed that by what seemed to them a preternatural prescience in foretelling what was about to happen, I could by the same means be a protection against the stray shells, which, clearing the fort above us, fell into the town.

It was an anxious moment for every one. Those long lingering flashes any one familiar with such scenes can recognize; gun flashes and shell blazes lit up the air incessantly. What

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troubled us most was the glittering crest of fire hard by on the left, where our troops were plying their Martini-Henrys in manful style. If the enemy be so near as to require being shot at from that, we said to ourselves, they must be very close indeed. Every now and then a shell of the attack would come screeching and whooping into the town, and light up some dark garden with its ominous blaze. So things went on during four and a half mortal hours. Nobody could tell how matters stood. At last came the daybreak; but still there was the same uninterrupted roar of fire, glad we were to say, sounding more distant. Another half-hour and the practised ear could tell that the attack had failed. Duller and duller sounded the grumble of musketry in the pale grey light; and there was fire in quarters which we couldn't understand. The fact was, we were all at sea until we had definite news later on.

To the east of the town is a long gently sloping hill, known as the Top Dagh (the cannon hill). It runs more or less at right angles to the longer axis of the oval town, and is crowned by three forts—in the centre the Medjidieh, to the right the Azizieh, and to the left the Karshach Tabia. This latter is named in honour of the inhabitants who, in 1854, lent personal and pecuniary aid to its construction. It is a rude earthen redoubt. The other two are stone-faced forts with steeply revetted scarps and imposing-looking stone barracks within, something like Forts Issy and Ivry outside Paris. At either extremity of the town are two hills; one is the top Dagh, the other the Keremitlik tabia hill, just like the Emir Oglon and its companion fort at Ardahan. The possession of either would have ensured the town to the assailants. They chose the Top Dagh, the more difficult of the two, because, I suppose, it lay nearest their positions on the Toui Dagh, a parallel line of hills, whence they could assail without marching a long way round under the fire of the guns of the ramparts, sufficiently dangerous even at night. Besides, there are some streams, minor tributaries of the Western Euphrates, which have been dammed up so as to produce inundations and marshy ground, very inconvenient for a night assailant, and which cover a large

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extent of rampart on the north. I need hardly say that no one, especially a Giaour, could venture outside the ramparts, or even near them, in the darkness. Fortunately for personal safety, there was no necessity for this. High above us, black against the starless blackness, was the long huge mass of the Top Dagh. It was much too near my residence to be agreeable. Consistent with strict personal safety, I could not have been much nearer the main scene of conflict; and occasionally the semi-musical whizz of a bullet or shell fragment reminded the forgetful of personal risks.

As the red dawn came over the Deve-Boyun hills, intelligence of the actual situation began to reach us. I was "on the house-top." Cavalry soldiers going wildly about informed the public that the Russians had taken the Azizieh Fort. And this was a fact, as we afterwards learned. At two o'clock in the morning the enemy had stormed the advanced work on the southern extremity of the Top Dagh. It seems they surprised the garrison and even entered into the great stone barracks amid the work. We afterwards saw the broad scaling ladder they had left in the fosse. It seems they surprised the sleeping sentinels and got into the place before any one was rightly aware what was going on. People who were there tell me that the assailing force, some two companies of grenadiers, wore fezes in order to deceive the defenders. This I don't believe. One thing there can be no doubt about —the Azizieh Fort was taken, and it was only towards day-break that Mehemet Pacha, the hero of Kiziltepe and Yagni Cutchuk, succeeded in retaking it at the head of three battalions. Had we known what was really going on at the time I believe a most disastrous panic would have ensued.

As it was, the troops, armed citizens included, remained steady at their posts. Shortly after daybreak, finding that the din of combat got further and further off, I rode out to see what way matters was going. The Turks had already assumed the aggressive, and were fighting down at the western end of the Deve-Boyun Pass, which adjoins the city. A long line of cavalry, supported by heavy reserves, was halted across the valley mouth. I went slowly forward and saw a heavy infantry engagement going on away up the Pass. The

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Turkish troops were pursuing the Russians, who had failed to hold their own in the Azizieh Fort. For an hour I watched the fight, and then I began to see Russian troops pushing along the mountain slopes which gird the plain south of Erzeroum. I feared that, as at the battle of Aladja, field guns were pushing on to sweep our line of retreat, and I began drawing back towards the town gate. Shortly after the Ottomans began to retire, and I entered the town somewhat hurriedly with fugitive horsemen.

It was well I did so, for considerable disorder followed. The armed townspeople, who had made a sally, had allowed themselves to be drawn too far, and when the enemy reassumed the offensive, withdrew with a certain amount of haste. I went up afterwards to look at the night's battlefield. Russian and Turkish dead covered the ground within and without the ramparts of Azizieh; the former, as usual under such circumstances, entirely stripped of their clothing. Some of the townspeople, in a spirit of uncompromising hatred, were maltreating their dead enemies—one man jumping with both heels on the still fresh body of a Russian, a gurgling cry escaping from his mouth with each concussion. The bodies were being buried as quickly as possible by order of Mukhtar Pacha. Indeed, a very considerable number had been already interred when I reached the ground. The Turkish loss was, I dare say, nearly seven hundred *hors de combat*. I do not think the Russians lost much more. We are momentarily expecting a renewal of hostilities, and feel pretty sure that ere long our communications with Trebizond will be cut by the enemy's cavalry. As it is, we can see them hovering about the mouth of the Olti Valley north of the town.

□ ERZEROUM, *November 12th*.—It is nine o'clock in the evening, pitchy dark, save when the congreve rockets and field-gun shells light up the gloom with their blazing flash. The heavy rumble of musketry mingles with the downpour of rain and the splashing of the street currents, and the half-savage dogs of an Eastern town howl hoarsely. For the second time the Russians are assailing the Medjidieh and Azizieh Forts on

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the Top Dagh east of the town, and have apparently added a subsidiary attack on the northern ramparts, outside of which their rocket corps are established. On the last occasion they took the Azizieh Fort. At present we do not know how we stand. The musketry which is blazing wildly along the crest of the Top Dagh tells us how near the enemy is. Since I commenced this I have gone out on the flat earthen roof of the semi-Armenian, semi-Persian house which I inhabit. The wild glare of the rockets puts all calculation at nought. Whether the blaze came from guns of the defence, from shells, or from those other projectiles latterly introduced into Asiatic warfare, no uninitiated person could tell. For me, it is not the first time I have heard the noisy rocket whizz, and I feel comparatively at ease as I come down again from my perch and commence writing. The heavy, foggy night, the drizzling rain, the unexpected hour, all tend to make one believe that something serious is meant. Before morning we shall know. While listening to all this rude noise, and not knowing the instant a shell clearing the brow of the fort, not over one thousand yards off, and hanging steeply above the town, may drop on the roof, it is not easy to write. But, as I may not have time to-morrow, I deliver myself to the reflections of the moment.

Hard by, on a minaret, the priest of the mosque is making his sonorous voice heard above the surrounding din. He is calling on Allah to protect the brave defenders of the ramparts; and, as I happen to know in what condition these defenders find themselves, I think they stand in need of all the extraneous help they can get. The regular troops are so few compared to the extent of the ramparts—it would take forty thousand men to hold them efficiently against a simultaneous attack—that the local Bashi-Bazouks, the armed inhabitants of the town, do regular military service to replace the missing troops. These men, with their printed calico garments and mediæval flint-lock muskets, must be having a hard time of it in the glacial downpour of rain which characterizes a situation considerably over eight thousand feet above the sea level, and in the midst of the month of November.

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The streets are quiet enough. The Armenian population, like so many rabbits in a burrow, seek the furthermost shelter of their rickety houses. The Moslems, the privileged warriors, are all at the ramparts. Nasty troops of wolf-like dogs, who belong to nobody, cower on the rubbish heaps at the corners, and show their glimmering teeth at the few passers-by, called outside by the circumstances, like myself. You meet half-drowned soldiers, heavily laden with clot-like bread packed in their sodden blankets. Poor fellows! they take it all calmly enough. There is Allah, and the Padishah, and Mukhtar Pacha, who bid them go, and used as they are to obey the every nod of a nameless Pacha, far off in a province it would take a gazeteer to find out, how can they dream that victory is not chained to their standards? And yet the battle of Aladja and the capture of Deve-Boyun are not so remote. They say one of the best characteristics of British troops is that they don't know when they are beaten. Turkish soldiers possess this quality to a rare extreme. Who knows how far it may carry them?

Half an Hour Later.—All is still, save when the thunder of a heavy gun from the nearer ramparts indicates that the gunners fancy they perceive something five hundred yards off, on a night when fifty paces away a horseman could not be possibly visible. As a rule Turkish gunners have more courage than common sense to spare. Evidently for the moment everything is over; but I know enough of Russian persistency to be fearful that before morning dawns my scant slumbers may be broken in upon by the far from agreeable noise that tells of the effective range of shells and rockets. These latter projectiles make more noise than they do harm in an earth-roofed, stone-built town like Erzeroum. There is a great deal of whizzing, followed by a blazing glare of red light, and a thundering detonation. At first these missiles frightened the Turkish soldiery immensely; but now they are getting used to them, they consider them no worse than shells. It was curious to go out into the streets after the attack. Every one was still at his post. The liquid mud which on the occasion of a rainfall takes the place of water

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here was duly fumbling its heavy way down the ill-paved precipitous streets; the uneasy dogs still felt inclined to snap at the unturbaned stranger; and from away out in the plain came the pattering fire of the obstinate Muscovites, unwilling to abandon their attack even though repulsed.

From what I have seen of the fighting of the population of Erzeroum, I consider it, from a military point of view, immensely superior to that of Kars. It may be, it is true, that my experience of these latter was drawn from runaway conduct in an open plain; whereas here, every one fights behind a breastwork. Still the fact cannot be denied that I have seen honest old Moslems with long white beards, and brass-ringed octagonal stocked muskets of another age, in the advanced forts, awaiting the attack with a bravery that might shame younger men. A little way further on, one sees men bearing something muffled in a dusky blanket. It is a wounded man. Then come many more such. Smothered fires gleam along the rear of the ramparts. They were lit to enable men perishing on this bitter cold night to stand the biting temperature. A bugle rings out; it is followed by many another. The *sonnerie* is "Long life to the Padishah!" and wild cries that seem far from cheerful reply to the call. Again and again comes the bugle-call; and as often comes the same wailing cry in return. There was a time to-night when the critical moment had arrived, and when this cry, uttered in a transport of enthusiasm, reached us from the lines on the Top Dagh above. Many believed it was a Russian "hurrah," and many a one barred his doors, fearing the arrival of a victorious storming column. A rumour is prevalent here (of its truth I have up to the present had no means of judging), that the Russians never assault save when the troops are full of the ardent spirit called *vodka*. Our prime fear in Erzeroum is the arrival of excited soldiers, in an exalted state; and many a one who wishes well to the assailants—the Armenians and Greeks, who form such a large proportion of the population—would welcome a victorious-assaulting column, if it were not for this dread of abnormally stimulated energies. I wish to recommend this observation to the enemy's commanders; for the evils inseparable from

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war are in the minds of people here intensified by the dread of an excited soldiery. In war, no doubt, many things are justifiable which, under other circumstances, would hardly be considered fair. In reply to these accusations, we have had, no later than yesterday, a striking proof of Russian humanity. In the afternoon a train of arabas (ox waggons) debouched from the mouth of the Deve-Boyun Pass. It bore sixty-nine wounded Turks captured at Hassan Kalé, when the Russians surprised us there. It was accompanied by a letter from the Grand Duke Michael, commenting on the different behaviour of his troops towards the Turkish wounded, and that of the Sultan's army towards the Russians. Of these Turkish wounded, each one had given him two blankets and one hundred piastres (about ten shillings). Poor fellows! many were badly maimed, but none had been forwarded to the Turkish lines till judged fit for transport. The araba drivers said they had been very fairly treated by the Russian regulars, but complained of the blows received at the hands of the Cossack escort which accompanied the train to expedite their march. Irregulars are at best a bad set in any army; and no doubt the Cossacks are as much up to the mark in this respect as the Karapabaks on our side.

The post is an institution long since fallen into disuse. No one, save the powers that be, can have an idea of its date of departure—even when it does depart. To ensure the arrival of my letters, I have been obliged to send special foot couriers, as I did from Kars. Even then the risk is very considerable. The man must first run his chance of the Turkish irregulars outside the walls, and then of the stray Cossack squadrons who find their way to the high road between this and Trebizond. After these come the brigands. I had to pay for a new coat for my last courier, summarily disrobed on the Kop Dagh. People may wonder why our news from this side does not reach Europe more quickly. They should be here to judge.

Midnight.—I have sat up till this hour, awaiting a fresh assault. Everything is quiet. I can't say whether we shall have another renewal of the attack by daybreak. In any case I

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go to bed to be prepared for exigencies. The rain continues to fall heavily. Even the dogs keep silent. The poor Bashi-Bazouks on the ramparts are to be pitied almost as much as the Correspondent of the *Daily News*, who finds himself in Erzeroum, the last of his kind, trusting to Providence to get his letters off.

□ *November* 14*th*.—Your readers can hardly imagine what a time we are having here with shells and congreve rockets. It is only in the intervals of the fire that I can possibly write. In the foregoing I only allude to direct assaults. We have now become so accustomed to distant fire that we do not think it worth mentioning. It is now three in the morning. I have had several visits from Turkish officers to congratulate me on the fact of my being the last "Moukhir" on the ground, and to tell me how good an impression is produced on the troops by the fact "that an Englishman still stands by them."

□ Erzeroum, *Thursday*, *November* 21*st*.—With each succeeding moment our peril increases. We have been again summoned to surrender, under pain of immediate bombardment, and a Russian message simultaneously announced the fall of Kars. This news I have not been permitted to telegraph, as only intelligence favourable to the Turkish cause will be permitted by wire. This information has been officially announced.

On Tuesday last the anxiety of the inhabitants rose to a painful pitch of intensity. It was the feast of St. Michael, the patron saint of the Russian Grand Duke, and for some time past a belief had been gaining ground that the saint's day would be signalized either by another furious attack, or by the opening of the bombardment. About midday the booming of artillery led us to suppose our fears were about being realized. All the morning the greatest activity had prevailed at head-quarters, and it was evident something serious was expected. The cannonade, however, ceased as suddenly as it had begun, without a single projectile having reached the town. We now learn that it was a salute which was being fired, some suppose for the Grand Duke's fête day, others in celebration of the

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fall of Kars. About this latter event we have no information save current rumours, and the statement of the Russian messenger.

The same day a peasant bearing a letter from Hussein Havni Pacha, commanding at Kars, reached Erzeroum. He had been ten days *en route*, owing to the necessity of making détours to avoid the enemy. The letter stated that the Russians had attacked the fort of Hafiz Pacha on the 9th instant, and though they succeeded in penetrating into the work, were ultimately driven out again with a loss of twelve hundred. The town was much injured by the Russian bombardment, and by the unfortunate explosion of a large powder magazine. Provisions were reported to be plentiful, but the inhabitants, demoralized by the terrible efficacy of the Russian fire, clamoured for a surrender. The General stated that unless aid reached him within ten days he would probably be forced to surrender. Situated as Kars is, all aid is impossible, so that as the time specified by the General has already expired, the surrender of the town seems quite within the realms of probability. Should it be true that the Russians are masters of Kars, the capture of Erzeroum becomes a mere matter of time. The Russian forces neutralized by the siege operations of Kars can now be brought up, and the heavy guns used in attacking the latter place put in position against this town. The inhabitants are in a state of continued alarm, and unless kept in awe by Mukhtar Pacha's army, would probably send in their submission to the Russian commander immediately. It is only with the greatest difficulty they can be got to keep their shops open. The civil governor was obliged to ordain a fine of five pounds in the case of those refusing to comply with the orders in this regard. The people themselves tell me it is through fear of the soldiery they dare not keep their shops open. Bashi-Bazouks, they say, come in to purchase articles, demanding change for large notes. Small money is almost entirely absent here, and when the merchant is unable to give the requisite change, the purchasers lay hands on the article, and go away without paying at all. It is true a good deal of irregularity exists among soldiers off duty, as a consequence of the existing panic. Only a few days ago the

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General-in-Chief was obliged to have nine soldiers shot, and a colonel degraded, for irregular conduct and personal cowardice during the late fights.

From the European newspapers which reach this place I see with astonishment how persistently the Turkish Stamboul authorities persist in stating that Hadji Rechid Pacha and his division succeeded in making their way from the Aladja Dagh and joining Mukhtar Pacha at Yenikani. There is not a word of truth in this statement, or in that that any of the other six generals captured on the same occasion succeeded in getting away. It is true that Moussa Pacha and Ghazi Mehemet Pacha (Schamyl) got away with their personal attendants, but, then, these are not included in the list of seven generals taken prisoners with the bulk of the army and the forty-two guns.

□ ERZEROUM, *November 23rd.*—Owing to the result of the Kars operations, a large Russian force has been able to be added to the Grand Duke's army around our walls, and heavy guns have been put in position. In all likelihood this is the last letter I shall be able to send from Erzeroum, as our communications will doubtless be cut almost immediately. As I have already announced, the Civil Government has gone off towards Trebizond, and the reinforcements *en route* for Erzeroum ordered to halt at the Kop Dagh, a huge mountain forming one of the last military positions between this and Trebizond. To-day, I learn that the Commander-in-Chief has sent off his personal effects, and is preparing to follow the battalions despatched to keep the road in the immediate vicinity of the town free from Cossacks. The whole thing looks very bad for us; and every one in the town shares this opinion with me. Next comes the question, if Mukhtar Pacha leaves us, will he at the same time act as at Kars, leaving a garrison behind him, and ordering the defence of Erzeroum; or will he simply evacuate the town? When the Marshal was overwhelmed at Aladja he fell back on Kars with his shattered army. The Russians were close by; not only close by, but had already passed us on the way to the Soghanli Mountains, menacing our line of retreat. After one

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day's stay in Kars to gather into form his disorganized military elements, Mukhtar Pacha—wisely deeming that if he committed himself solely to the defence of the city, keeping within its lines, he would leave Erzeroum and the entire of the province at the mercy of mere flying columns—fell back, as I have already described in preceding letters, along the Olti Valley. He halted merely to give Ishmael Pacha time to rejoin him, as the latter fled from Bayazid. The union took place at Kuprikoi, and thence the united force fell back on the position at Deve-Boyun covering Erzeroum.

Here we have the comparison: Mukhtar Pacha, covering Kars, holding the position of Aladja in front of the town, then the same General, falling back on another position, covering Erzeroum. Beaten from this, he falls back on the town as he did on Kars. The question is, Will he not again repeat the same tactics and fall back from Erzeroum in turn on the tremendous position of the Kop Dagh, leaving a garrison behind him? Defeated at Aladja, he could not hold the nearer position of the Soghanli Mountains. He had to retreat to the junction of the Erzeroum and Bayazid roads, where he could join with the troops of the extreme right wing, and found no nearer standing-point than Deve-Boyun. Still, though beaten there, the winter had already set in, retarding the enemy's march; Kars still held out; and close by was the city of Erzeroum, its ramparts armed with a formidable artillery, and sufficiently garrisoned to defy a *coup de main* of an advanced guard. When beaten at Deve-Boyun, reinforcements were already on their way to join the Turkish army. They came too late for the fight, but soon enough to be a timely garrison for Erzeroum. The Russian pursuing force, coming slowly up through the narrow mountain Pass of Deve-Boyun, commanded by the advanced Erzeroum forts and the western ramparts, could not possibly assail the reinforced Turkish troops.

Erzeroum saved the Ottoman army from a precipitate retreat on the second last position covering Trebizond, the Kop Dagh. Its extent and resources alone altered the situation after the second retreat of the Turkish army. But how long it will continue to do so is another question. In the 1828–9

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campaign it fell at once after the taking of Kars. It is true that since the Crimean war it has in one sense been strongly fortified—very strongly for these days. But Erzeroum is within easy shelling range of modern artillery from many a surrounding hill-side, and its position can be turned north and south. An enemy holding the Deve-Boyun Pass can march at will on Trebizond or Ersigan, leaving a couple of divisions to masque the town. A general-in-chief, with what is left to him of an army, cannot afford to shut himself up here. That would be to leave Armenia in the hands of the enemy, and to ensure the certain surrender of himself and his army, unless, like Hussein Hami Pacha, he could elude the vigilance of the beleaguerers, and escape into the hills like the ex-Commander of Kars, whose advent is hourly expected here. We have a line of ramparts which in the olden times required at least forty thousand men to guarantee them against a general attack. To-day there are not twenty thousand within the walls. Suppose the Marshal retires in time on the Kop Dagh with part of his force, Erzeroum is inevitably lost within three days. Honour and orders from Constantinople forbid a total evacuation. A victorious enemy's army launched across the plain would inevitably sweep like one of its own avalanches over the Kop Dagh, half garrisoned, in any case; so that whatever way we look at the situation, I think it a lost one for the Turks. Some people talk about the winter interrupting Russian operations. They said the same about the line of communications between this and Kars; they said the Soghanli Mountains were impassable a month ago, and yet the Russians are now at our very doors. Mukhtar Pacha, then, finds himself in the very disagreeable position of being forced to retire before the enemy, leaving an insufficient garrison. It is hard to say how matters will eventually turn out, but on the whole they look uncommonly bad for Mukhtar Pacha and his army. Even though we be not assaulted on all sides; even though the Russians spare the large Christian population of the town the horrors of a bombardment, there is another possible and very probable contingency. The Russian troops set free by the capture of Kars are already on the march to Deve-Boyun.

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Another three days will find them joined to the force which menaces us. We all believe that this force of over twenty-five thousand men will not limit itself to sitting down idly in company with an army already sufficiently formidable to defy any aggression on our part, but will by a turning movement occupy the way that leads to Trebizond, at a few leagues from this, cutting our communications and reducing us to a fatal condition of isolation. I myself think this will be effected, and before long. Accordingly, with a view of keeping up my postal communications, I intend, *inch Allah*, as the Turks say, speedily to move my quarters to a point outside the possible lines of investment.

The latest fugitive from Kars brings us a tale of terror. He says that every one, Christian as well as Mussulman, was put to the sword when the Russians surprised the town. The bearer of the tidings was a Mussulman, and no doubt was not unduly charitable to the foe. What he says, duly embellished, had succeeded in throwing the timid Armenian inhabitants into a paroxysm of ecstatic terror. In my capacity of correspondent—a being supposed here to be endowed with an all but supernatural knowledge on current events, and a prescience of no mean order as to the future, I have had crowds of people invading my *oda*, and tremulously asking what they should do in view of the impending catastrophe. It is really pitiable to witness the mental condition of the Christian population. Men are divided between the double fear of a massacre of Christians by irate Turks, and a massacre of everybody by excited Russians in the course of a night attack.

A very curious and interesting case has just come to light in connection with the Russian assault on the town on the morning of the 10th inst. During the fight, a certain Captain Temayeff, after a single combat with a Turkish officer, was severely wounded. The latter, too, was so roughly handled that he is now in hospital. Evidence showed that the Russian had not died of his wounds, but been done to death by subsequent maltreatment as he lay wounded outside the fort he assailed with his men. Somehow—and we do not know how—the Russians got wind of

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the affair. Turkish officials tell me there is some one within the town who, under cover of other business, keeps the enemy informed of what goes on. Anyhow, the Russians sent in a flag of truce with a demand to investigate the particular case I refer to. The French Consul, M. Gilbert, being the person authorized to protect Russian interests during the abnormal existing state of things, took the matter up. Then it appeared that Captain Temayeff came by his end owing to gross maltreatment while he was lying wounded and helpless on the field of battle. The man who first struck him down, and who was himself severely wounded in return, was called as a witness. He is a Turkish captain, then in hospital. He stated that during the fight he incidentally met with Captain Temayeff, and thereupon entered into combat with him, that he struck at him with his sabre, and that the captain, parrying the blow with his revolver, struck in return, wounding the deponent severely; whereupon deponent did strike again, putting Captain Temayeff *hors de combat*. This he declares is all he knows about the matter. Other witnesses say they saw people jumping upon the wounded body of the Russian captain, and declare they believe that by these acts of violence he was killed, or at least his death hastened in an unseemly manner. The investigation is still pending. The great matter of curiosity is how the Russians came to know what passed within our lines so long after they had withdrawn to theirs. The thing only shows that something wrong is going on within the town; it is not the first time it has been suspected.

We are still waiting for Hussein Hami Pacha, Commandant of Kars, and the three hundred horsemen that got out of Kars during the assault. I am afraid he has suffered some mishap. As the relicts of the fight, who reach us from time to time, come in, they confirm the intelligence that the Russians entered by an embrasure in the Khanlitabia, and that there was some collusion between its garrison and the attacking party. The fall of the frontier town has produced a sad effect on the belligerent population. In it they see the reflex of their own fate. The other day a rumour went abroad that the Commander-in-Chief had already sent away his personal

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baggage, and that he himself was about to follow in the rear of his movables. Thereupon a crew of combat-fearing persons waited on me, all wishing to know whether the thing was true in substance, and, if so, what would be the probable result. I had heard the same thing myself from reliable sources, and, to say the truth, was sorely troubled in spirit what to do or think. I determined that a visit to the Marshal himself was the shortest way to meet the difficulty.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when I called on Mukhtar Pacha at the Yeni Kishlar, the principal barracks of Erzeroum. It is a wide, desolate-looking square of sad-coloured limestone, looking like a model European prison. A crowd of ragged camels and Rosinante-like pack-horses stray perpetually in its immediate vicinity. I entered by the main gate. Four sentinels on either side guarded it. I flung my horse's bridle to one, and taking a dirty staircase to the left, arrived at a long wide corridor, desolate and dirty as the staircase. Awkward-looking soldiers with yellowish-white baggy overcoats stood about and came uneasily to "attention" as any unknown tolerably-dressed stranger and possible Pacha came by. A long line of great arched windows fronted an equal extent of blank, dreary wall, along which hung, like so many funeral palls, the sombre-coloured curtains closing the entrances to the different apartments. No. 1 is that of the captain of the guard—where that functionary, clad in brown flannel, sits gloomily staring at the dingy, whitewashed walls, smutted by the smoke of the tottering stove that roars like a small tempest in the corner. Next door are a couple of aides-de-camp, one of whom, after conducting you to the neighbouring chamber of the secretary, lifts the drapery before the Marshal's doorway, and you are in the presence of the redoubted Ghazi Achmet Mukhtar Pacha, Commanding-in-Chief the Ottoman armies of Armenia. The room, like the others, is bare and whitewashed. A low divan runs round two of its sides. Opposite the door, on the divan, is a wolf-skin and a cushion—the bed of the Marshal. In another corner of the divan is a sheepskin stained red. It is an old acquaintance of mine. I have seen it in Herzegovina and in Montenegro. I have seen it in sight of Alexandropol, when we were on the

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Aladja Mountain; I have seen it on the Soghanli Dagh, and during the memorable flight from Kars. And here in the Marshal's chamber I meet it again, and, as usual, the Marshal seated cross-legged upon it.

An Eastern salaam given and returned, and I am motioned gravely to a seat on the divan. Mukhtar Pacha is always courteous, sometimes cordial, but rarely. Few Easterns are expansive even in the smallest way. It was some time since I had seen the Marshal, nearly a fortnight; but even that brief time had wrought sad changes. He is middle-sized and square-faced. When I knew him first his features were rounded and fresh-coloured, and his eye bright. Now, thought and care have traced long furrows on cheek and brow; and though there is in the eyes a feverish fire, it is rather that of desperation and fierce resolution than the buoyant expression of the victor of Chorumdusi and Kiziltepé. At my last interview the Marshal had spoken on the battle of Deve-Boyun, and given me the sketch of the plan which I forwarded. On the latter occasion we spoke mainly about the articles in the London newspapers touching the battle of Aladja, and I translated for him *in extenso* that which appeared in the *Times*. As I translated it with the severest impartiality, and conveyed its full meaning, it may be imagined the General was not by any means content with the writer who, whoever he be, had better keep himself out of Armenia. He explained his defeat, as he had done that of Aladja, by the extraordinary accuracy of the enemy's artillery fire, which at Deve-Boyun dismounted fourteen of his guns. I said that the most sinister rumours prevailed in the town, every one being under the impression that an evacuation of Erzeroum was imminent. "Is your Excellency about to leave us?" I asked. With a warmth very unusual in so calm-tempered a man, he turned almost fiercely towards me. "Jamais, jamais," he exclaimed, "while I have a man to stand by the guns I shall never abandon Erzeroum."

I know the General trusts a good deal to the ally that beat the French at Moscow, and when coming away from the Yeni Kishlar I turned my eyes to the spectral white outlines of the

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Deve-Boyun mountains, half lost in whirling storms of snow, I could not help sharing his idea. Still the Russians are there, out in the sleet blasts, and we can see them working at what looks suspiciously like a battery. Yesterday the caravan from Persia came in, strangely enough—allowed to pass through the Russian lines and enter a besieged city. It came on boldly down the Deve-Boyun Pass without taking even the ordinary precaution of sending ahead a flag of truce. The result was that when the long column of men and camels appeared in sight the heavy guns of the ramparts opened fire, supposing naturally enough that it was a Russian storming column that was advancing. The scene that followed may be imagined. Camels, mules, and men all fled in wild disorder as the first huge shells burst among them, and it was hours before the caravan could be again collected. When it ultimately got into Erzeroum, the Persians stated that the Russians were, to all appearances, permanently camped in the Deve-Boyun Pass. The tents, they told us, were covered outside with thick felt; and each had a stove, well supplied with wood. Mukhtar Pacha says that, in view of the precautions taken since the last two attempts to carry the Kop Dagh forts by assault, he has now no fear of the city falling by a *coup de main* on any one particular point. A general assault, both on forts and on the lower ramparts in the plain, is what he fears most—especially when the entire of the Kars army arrives. I left the General's presence convinced that, whatever the possibilities on the part of the enemy, Erzeroum was to be defended *coûte qui coûte*.

When I got to the bottom of the stairs I became aware of an incident which for some time rather irritated me. During my visit to the Commander-in-Chief I had left my horse in the covered entrance below, where four sentries, side by side, did honour to the Marshal's presence. My horse's bridle and saddle-cloth and one of the saddle-girths had been abstracted by some gallant trooper. I complained at once to the General, and though the captain of the guard seemingly made every effort to recover the lost articles, no result followed. I do not know whether this kind of thing is

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possible opposite Whitehall. Here many wonderful things come to pass.

□ ILLIDGE (CLOSE TO ERZEROUM), *November 28th.*—Since writing the preceding, rumours of the most alarming kind relative to the movements of the newly-arrived Russian troops led me to believe that our communications with Trebizond were seriously menaced. I accordingly resolved on carrying out my project of moving to a point where, while within easy distance of Erzeroum (three hours' journey), I should also be in a more favourable position to retire on the Kop Dagh mountain should the worst arrive. I have only got in here, and have no time to describe the place or its surroundings, as the post goes almost immediately. As I rode out of Erzeroum I noticed the extraordinary precautions of which Mukhtar Pacha had spoken. On the ramparts, sentries at fifty yards' intervals ; in the covered ways, a similar line; and fifty yards from the crest of the glacis, a first line of sentinels in rifle-pits, not twenty yards apart. Another fifty yards further out a similar line, the rifle-pits alternating with those of the first line. And this in broad daylight. Add to this that Muhir Ali, the chief of irregular horse, patrols incessantly the ground over which an enemy could advance, and it will be seen that a surprise is hardly possible. What may be effected by frank force remains to be seen.

□ ILLIDGE (CLOSE TO ERZEROUM), *December 4th.*—Winter has set darkly in over Armenia; and every day we marvel more and more how the Russians can hold their own against the weather away up the Deve-Boyun mountains, notwithstanding even their felt-covered tents and well-supplied stoves. We who are down in the plain, that is, merely six thousand feet above the sea level, cannot help speculating on the feelings of the beleaguering force, perched on ridges a couple of thousand feet above us. Let your readers only fancy wintering in tents at an elevation something double that of Snowdon, and in a climate far severer than the insular one of Great Britain; yet there they are, and whatever their intentions about

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coming down to share the flat-topped houses of Erzeroum with us, they show not the slightest symptom of retracing their steps. As I mentioned in my last letter, so persuaded am I that the present apparent inaction of the enemy is but a cover for some comprehensive and fatal move, as far as the capital of Armenia is concerned, that I thought it best to occupy a strategic point, close to that chosen by Sir Arnold Kemball a good many days ago. Postal and telegraphic communications were my principal object, for whether Erzeroum be stormed or invested, we (the correspondents) would be for a considerable period after the event forced to keep our news for our own particular delectation. I feared one of these particular possibilities :—First, and most likely, a turning movement of the extra-Russian troops coming up from Kars; secondly, a violent bombardment and universal flight of telegraphic and postal functionaries ; thirdly, a general assault; after which, for some time, as far as I was concerned, a general disorganization of society would necessarily follow, not to speak of the always possible chance of coming in contact in the depths of the night with some assailant more or less artificially stimulated. All these considerations weighed with me in taking up my present position ; but, besides, I had another in view. When within Erzeroum one knows little or nothing of the enemy's positions; here one is in the extreme line of patrols.

A celebrated border guerilla chief, by name Muhir Ali, is charged with the surveillance of the mouth of the Olti Valley, and general observance of the ground adjoining the mountains on the western side of the plain. He commands some hundreds of cavalry known as the Karapabaks, the "black hats." They are all border men like himself, and wear as distinctive head-dress the truncated cone of black sheepskin, whence they derive their name. They have done good service along the Alexandropol frontier previous to the disastrous fight of Aladja, and, having retreated with Mukhtar Pacha, now constitute the only effective cavalry force at his disposition. They are armed with the sixteen-shooting Winchester rifle, with a sprinkling of Martini-Peabody guns. Owing to the considerable period during

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which they have had the choosing amid the cattle of the country, they are very fairly horsed; and, as a large number wear the overcoats of dead Cossacks, tolerably well clothed. I dare say they are a terror to the enemy—*ça va sans dire*—perhaps almost as much as to the Armenians of villages such as this which I inhabit for the moment. The Armenians are a people who, as I have more than once previously mentioned, are a timid, clever, hardworking lot of folks, who, either from long desuetude or a natural dislike to arms, are but too apt to yield ready compliance to any demand accompanied by a promiscuous firing of pistols and brandishing of naked swords, without even the show of resistance. I should myself often feel rather timid when an irruption of wild horsemen breaks on the desolation of our villiage were I not under the shelter of the *ægis* name of "Correspondent." There is a vague signification attached to this name, all the more effective that it is vague—the *omne ignotum pro terribili*. Sir Arnold Kemball's name is scarce second to that of Mukhtar Pacha himself among people, civil and military, here. When with a very justifiable caution he left Erzeroum for a village not far from this, where he still remains, I believe his abandonment of the town caused a serious fluctuation in money values; and I know that as a rule his movements are looked upon as exact indications of the fluctuations of Lord Beaconsfield's policy by the best-informed citizens of Erzeroum.

Being in such close contact with the foremost patrols, I naturally learn a good deal about the enemy's movements which I should not hear even from the Commander-in-Chief himself. For the moment the Russians limit themselves—that is, their original force—to the immediate vicinity of the Deve-Boyun Pass, and the mouth of the Olti Valley, where it debouches on the Erzeroum plain. From time to time a reconnaissance is pushed along the mountains south-west of Erzeroum, and we generally become aware of it by the heavy guns on the ramparts in that direction trying their longest range in an endeavour to derange the movements of the intruders. Still, on the whole, the Russian forces which conquered the heights of Deve-Boyun have suspiciously circumscribed their move-

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ments, and many a shrewd hypothesis is hazarded in the better-informed Turkish military circles as to the whereabouts of the lately disengaged forces which besieged Kars. As I mentioned in my last letter, the most extraordinary precautions are taken to prevent a surprise, especially at the side of the town opposite that occupied by the enemy. A triple line of sentinels guard the entire north-eastern front night and day; and if the men do anything like their duty, the Russians won't get into Erzeroum as they did into Kars.

I know the Commander-in-Chief counts much on the weather, and hopes that it will oblige the enemy to draw down into the plain to the rear towards Hassan Kalé. Yet, I can never bring myself to believe that the Russian generals will abandon hardly-won positions which Turkish reinforcements would render impregnable next spring. If an immediate attempt be not made in one form or another against the town, either in the form of an assault or an investment, it may be that the enemy will withdraw to milder quarters hard by, leaving only an often-relieved garrison in the bleak pass. In the case of an investment, the bulk of the hostile army could winter on the road to Trebizond just as warmly as in the other direction. Should they adopt the first idea, and partially retire, leaving only a garrison in the pass, it may be that by a desperate sortie the Turks will try to regain their lost laurels, and re-occupy the all-important defile—after Kars the gate of Armenia. I speak now of possibilities and probabilities; as regards actual certainty, I am probably as well-informed as the Commander-in-Chief himself.

Whatever be the result, the Ottoman Government has taken measures eminently calculated for the best, whichever way things may turn. Want of money and general necessity hinted at an advanced collection of imposts in money and kind—a present advantage, and a sore blow to the foe in case of his successfully occupying Armenia. The Turkish authorities have required, and received in advance, the contributions of the province up to the year 1880; a proceeding, some will say, justified by the circumstances. That may be; I merely chronicle the event.

While awaiting the grave circumstances which any moment

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may produce, perhaps a description of an Armenian village, far away from the limits of European civilization, may be acceptable. I rode from Erzeroum to Illidge in two hours. I crossed a wide bleak plain, blinding white with newly-fallen snow. At Guez, an intermediate village, I drew up to have a cup of coffee. My semi-military garb created a certain amount of suspicion. "Who knows," thought the villagers, "but this is only an excuse to enter an *oda*, and once there, he is quartered on us." Such, it seems, is their experience of Ottoman officers. However, my horses standing unbridled and unpacked at the door somewhat re-assured them, and for a backsheesh I got a couple of cups of unsugared coffee. A few words of question and answer. "Have the Russian patrols been here?" "No, pacha," was the reply. This I knew to be untrue, but in my hypothetic character these poor Armenians were not supposed to speak the absolute truth. From certain information, I knew that the Cossacks had been there but two evenings previously to requisition hay and oats. I went on.

An expanse of marshy ground, and a bridge which at a distance looked like that of a railway. Then came this village, Illidge. It looks like a place that once was populous, as the sense goes here. Now there are empty houses and deserted—thoroughfares, I suppose I must say. Streets they never could be called even in the best of times. Here and there a few suspicious-looking ducks and hens wandered, and occasionally an inhabitant peered cautiously round the angle of a snow-heaped dwelling. The newly-arrived horsemen might be Cossacks, or, worse still, the Karapabaks of Muhir Ali. A short parley, and the bolder of the inhabitants who ventured forth were convinced that we were neither one nor the other. As a result we were shown to the house of the chief man of the place, an unhappy individual, who, be the new-comers Christians or Mussulmans, is responsible for everything. Then we entered the chief man's house. It was a low, long building, the walls seven feet high, of rough stone rudely piled. The flat earth roof was thickly covered with snow. A long passage led to a stable, occupied by half a dozen cows, buffalo calves, and horses. An odour of ammonia exhaled

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from the place. In one corner, and separated only by a low, wooden partition, was the *oda*, the "guest chamber." A kind of pathway ran up its midst conducting to a stove-like fireplace, where cattle droppings, kneaded with earth, smouldered dimly. On either side the pathway were bands of wood, indicating the divans, where a kind of rush matting covered the beaten earth up to the rough wall. A mattress, two pillows, and a stuffed cotton quilt were luxuries accorded to the stranger guest. The level of the floors being considerably below that of the ground outside, and the roof of rough beams arched slightly, the chamber had a much larger and airier appearance than could be expected within the squat semi-subterranean building one looked at from the outside. In a kind of low gable opposite the fireplace, a single window eight inches square, and closed with white greased paper, admitted a dim light. Coming in from the blinding glare of the snowy plain, it was like entering a coal-cellar. At one's elbow, shut off only by a partition eighteen inches high, cows and calves munched their chopped straw. To inhabit the *oda* of an Armenian peasant's house is literally to inhabit a stable. All the sights, sounds, and odours of a rude, close stable are palpable to a degree far from pleasant. From the space outside the stable door ran long corridors of unplastered, uncemented rubble masonry, leading to the different chambers. The *oda* of the female portion of the family was a great square chamber, thirty feet either way, roofed with the peculiar kind of cupola common in these countries. Great beams cross diagonally above the corners, others cross these in an opposite sense, each tier advancing more than that below it over the centre of the room, till after six or seven tiers, a dome is formed, having in its summit a square opening, through which come air and light. There are a great many other chambers, devoted to storing grain, chopped straw, and hay, and agricultural implements. These houses are admirably adapted to the extremes of temperature of this climate. In summer the thick walls and earth-covered roofs keep the rooms comparatively cool; and when, as now, the cold is almost insupportable outside, the *oda*, under the joint influence of dung-fire

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and the animals collected alongside, is quite warm. Owing to this mild temperature within the chambers, even now the stray flies are to be seen; and, I am sorry to add, other more objectionable specimens of the insect creation. All night long one is disturbed by the groaning and complaining of the neighbouring quadrupeds; and long ere dawn shows faintly athwart the paper square in the gable, the plaintive lowing of hungry calves, and the angry cries of quarrelsome horses break one's rest. Even now, at ten at night, various animals wander incontinently to and fro; and not five minutes ago I was obliged to repel by physical force an incursion on the part of a large black ass, who walked solemnly in with a view of partaking of a bag of oats, which constitutes my impromptu writing-table. A calf is munching the end of a rush mat on which I sit, and I am obliged to keep an eye on a large black rat, who has serious designs on a cold fowl in the corner. At meal-times I am subjected to a new species of mortification. The elders of the village, accompanied by a large following, sit or stand outside the low railing at the end of the *oda*, and gaze upon my proceedings with the absorbed interest of a rustic witnessing for the first time some soul-stirring drama.

As these people speak but little Turkish, and that with Armenian idiom, our conversation is necessarily limited. The little Turkish I know myself is classical beside that of these people. I have an old servant named Ivan—a Russian taken prisoner at Kars in 1854, who has since dwelt at Erzeroum. During all this long time he has picked up but few words of Turkish, and I believe less of Armenian. Two days ago I sent him with letters and telegrams to Erzeroum. On his return he commissioned one of my usual crowd of lookers-on to communicate to me the result of his mission. Taking off his slippers, a tall, white-bearded old man advanced into the chamber. During some minutes he harangued me with considerable fluency. At the end of his address, I gathered that Erzeroum was on fire in several places; that a multitude of the inhabitants were flying in our direction; and that for one reason or the other one side of the house had

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fallen down. Subsequently I became aware that he wished to convey to me that Ivan informed him my telegram had gone off at once, and that my letters would be forwarded to me! Except to the polyglot linguist, this mingled dialect of Armenian, Turkish, Persian, and Kurd is not an agreeable language to converse in.

Illidge itself is a straggling village of some 300 houses such as I have described, and in ordinary times contains a population of over 1,500 inhabitants, the great majority Christian. A large and, for such a place, respectable looking church rises in its midst. It has a stable-like café, where no coffee is to be had, and half a dozen miserable shops or booths, only two of which are now open. From Illidge, as from every other place in the neighbourhood, all that were rich enough to do so, fled to Erzingan and Trebizond. It is now as dreary looking a place as could well be imagined. In peace times it is much resorted to by the people of Erzeroum and other neighbouring towns on account of its magnificent hot mineral springs. I visited one of these yesterday. A low circular building with domed roof covers a circular basin some 30 feet in diameter, hewn in a yellowish kind of rock something like fine grained Oolitic limestone. It is 5 feet deep and full to the brim with clear water, having a temperature of about 90 degrees Fahrenheit. This water gushes unceasingly from the centre of the floor of the basin, and flows away by a sluice into the neighbouring river, the Illidge Sú, which here expands into a pretty extensive lake. The flow of water is copious and continuous at all seasons, and accompanied by a large amount of carbonic acid gas, which causes the water to effervesce briskly, especially at two points towards the centre. Standing at the edge and seeing the bubbling water and dense steam-clouds rising from its surface, one would have said it was a huge seething cauldron. An opening in the centre of the dome, almost equal to the width of the basin, admits light. A stone platform 10 feet wide surrounds the basin, and adjoining the wall is a rough wooden divan for the accommodation of the bathers. Fee for admission there is none, nor, indeed,

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is there any guardian whatever. It is open to all comers. In its immediate vicinity the water pools are warm, and effervesce in the same manner as those of the basin. An immense thermal establishment might be erected over these sources; very probably would be, in any other country in the world. To judge by the taste, the water seems strongly impregnated with carbonate of iron. Another similar establishment exists close by, from which the water escapes with the velocity and quantity of an ordinary mill-race. Such is a description of my present abiding-place. With the exception of the hot springs, it is that of some dozen villages which dot the plain of Erzeroum on this side.

Two days ago our tranquillity was broken by the arrival of three battalions from Trebizond. They have been distributed among the villages between this and the mouth of the Olti Valley, and, in conjunction with the irregular cavalry of Muhir Ali, watch the road by which Erzeroum could be turned, and secure as well the Trebizond road against raids of the enemy's cavalry. Thus one more precaution is added to those already taken to secure our vulnerable point—the line of ramparts to the north of the city running generally at right angles to the Trebizond road.

It is a source of wonder to every one that the Russians have not ere this followed up their first two attacks by a third more serious and better supported. Had they on the first night, the 9th-10th November, acted as they possibly may in the course of a very brief space of time, the town would have been theirs with little comparative loss. As it is, while a serious assault from many different points is almost sure to succeed, still, now that Mukhtar Pacha's army has had time to recover from the fatigues and demoralisation of the late fighting, and that the defence is organized, we can look forward to a bloody struggle in case of direct assault. One thing is certain—the Russians cannot possibly dream of remaining till next spring in their present chilly quarters. It would cost them almost as many men as an assault.

Peasants who came in some days ago from the Russian lines—for, strange to say, the country people are allowed to circulate

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freely from one side to the other — state that the Turkish sick and wounded from Kars are on their way hither, to the number of 6,000. There is nothing incredible in this figure. When I retired from Kars with the Marshal and the remnant of the army on the 17th of October the chief of the medical department informed me that there were 4,500 sick and wounded in the hospitals. Though many of these must have succumbed naturally, or through the privations of the siege, the diminution in number must have been far more than compensated by the victims of the bombardment and the terrible explosion of the powder magazine. Then, again, there were the men *hors de combat* after the assault of the 19th of November; so that, considering the circumstances, I think the number stated, if anything, under the real amount. What seems incredible is, that the Russians should attempt to move such a large number of sick and wounded, at such a season, over such roads.

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CHAPTER V.

THE FALL OF PLEVNA.

The Operations in Bulgaria.—Attacks on the Army of the Lom.—Capture of Elena by Suleiman Pacha.—Recapture by the Russians and Retreat of the Turks.—State of Affairs before Plevna.—Condition of Osman Pacha's Army.—The Situation early in December.—Reports of Prisoners.—Russian Reinforcements.—Osman Pacha's Preparations for a Sortie.—The Night Before.—A Spy.—Abandonment of Turkish Positions.—General Skobeleff's Advance.—A Panorama of the Battle.—The First Circle Broken.—The Grenadiers in Action.—The Sortie Virtually Repulsed.—Renewed Struggles.—Desperate Fighting.—Plevna in the Hands of the Russians.—The White Flag.—Negotiations for a Capitulation.—On the Bridge.—Aspect of the Battlefield.—Interview with Tefik Bey.—Osman Pacha Wounded.—Conference between Ganetsky, Strukoff, and Osman Pacha.—Unconditional Surrender of the Turkish Army.—Arrival of the Grand Duke Nicholas with his Staff.—Entry into Plevna.—Meeting between Osman Pacha, the Grand Duke, and Prince Charles.—Osman Pacha's Place in History.—Appearance of the Turkish Troops.—Osman's Mode of Living.—Inside Plevna.—Tefik Bey and General Skobeleff Dine and Compare Notes.—Traces of the Contest.—Observations on the Policy of the Defence.—Review of Russian Troops on the Battlefield of Plevna by the Emperor, the Grand Duke and Prince Charles.—Departure of Reinforcements for the Army of the Balkans.—Estimate of the Strength, and Account of the Distribution of the Military Forces in European Turkey.

FREQUENT contests, some of which were by no means insignificant, though none exercised any important influence on the progress of the war, took place in various parts of Bulgaria during the latter part of the month of November. The outposts of the army under the command of the Czarewitch were continually molested, but, after some fighting, more or less severe, the arrival of Russian reinforcements generally gave the signal for the retreat of the Turks. On the 5th of December the forces under Suleiman Pacha, forming part of the Army of Shumla, advanced as far as Metchka, the Russians falling back before them: subsequently the latter were reinforced, and a sharp engagement ensued near Metchka and Trestineh,

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south of Pyrgos, on the Lower Lom. In this engagement, which lasted for five hours, the Turks suffered severely from adopting the system that had so often proved disastrous to their opponents. Advancing across the open to assail the Russians, who were under the cover of their entrenchments, the Turkish troops sustained heavy losses, and no less than two thousand five hundred bodies were stated to have been picked up by the Russians, at the close of the day, in front of their positions. Such disasters afforded a striking evidence of the reckless tactics of Suleiman Pacha, which had cost that commander so dearly during the protracted struggle in the Shipka Pass; for there is no reason to doubt that the description of the affair, as a reconnaissance, in the Turkish official despatches, correctly indicate its merely tentative character. These operations, at all events, produced no result, unless it were to divert attention from other points, or to induce the Russians to send a part of the troops, which were continually crossing the Danube, to reinforce the Army of the Czarewitch instead of the army before Plevna, or that under General Gourko in the Balkans.

On the left wing of Suleiman Pacha's Army, however, a more important movement soon declared itself. On the 4th of December a considerable Turkish force attacked and captured the important strategic position of Elena, on the road from the Balkan Passes east of Tirnova to that town. During eight hours' fighting, the Russians, under the command of Prince Mirsky, suffered heavy losses, and were at length compelled to fall back upon Jacowicka, a fortified position at the entrance to a gorge, where, on the following day, their assailants again attacked them with vigour, but without success. According to Turkish accounts, three hundred Russians were taken prisoners on this occasion, besides the capture of eleven guns, twenty ammunition waggons, and a quantity of arms. For a time, this movement

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wore the aspect of a formidable attempt to do something for the relief of Plevna; but the stand made at Jacowicka having afforded time for the arrival of strong reinforcements, the tide soon turned. According to a Russian despatch, Suleiman Pacha had at this time ten thousand men stationed opposite Slataritza, and thirty thousand opposite Jacowicka. But only two days after the capture of Elena the right Turkish column was driven from the former place, and compelled to retreat towards Prebova; and, subsequently, Elena fell once more into the hands of the Russians, having been set a-fire and evacuated by Suleiman Pacha. These and some aimless and disastrous attacks, renewed by the right wing of Suleiman Pacha's army, upon the positions of the Czarewitch on the Lower Lom, virtually brought to a close the offensive operations of the Army of Shumla, the progress of events afterwards compelling its commander to concentrate his forces for the defence of the Rustchuk, Rasgrad, and Shumla line.

Thus, one by one, the hopes of the gallant defenders of Plevna were extinguished. In the south-east, the capture of the Pravca Pass by General Gourko had effectually destroyed the plans of the commander of that Army of Relief on which, at Constantinople, such confident expectations had been based, and, as we have seen, the desperate attempt of the Army of Shumla to advance by breaking through the lines of the Army of the Lom, had no less signally failed. At Plevna, vigorous sorties, chiefly against General Skobeleff's positions, continued to furnish employment for the troops under that distinguished commander, while the difficulty of finding shelter from the bullets of the Turks, finally compelled him to shift his head-quarters to Uzendol, three-quarters of a mile from his former quarters at Brestovec. The question, however, had now resolved itself simply into that of how long Osman Pacha could hold out upon his accumulated stores; and when he would be compelled to make that attempt to "break through," which,

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despite its desperate and even hopeless character, few doubted would furnish the final incident of his memorable defence.

With regard to these points, some uncertainty still prevailed. But the plans of Osman Pacha were soon removed from the region of speculation.

Nearly four months had now elapsed since the 18th of July, when General Schilder-Schuldner made the first attempt to take Plevna. He was permitted to enter, but when his men were beginning to make themselves at home, they were fired upon from windows and roofs of houses and suffered enormous loss. Two days after, the attack was renewed and repulsed with heavy loss. On the 30th of August, General Krüdener and Prince Schahofsky made a great attack upon the place, and sustained a great defeat. A third attack was made under the eye of the Emperor on the 11th of September, and completely failed. Finally, Plevna succumbed rather to famine than to the sword.

The following letters afford particulars of the condition of affairs before Plevna on the eve of the crowning event of the sortie and the surrender :—

† Uzendol, Loftcha Road, *December 2nd.*—The Russian leaders have no middle course. They dared in September to attack Osman with 65,000 men. They do not dare to attack him now with 120,000, although he is considerably weaker than he was then. They do not even dare to detach General Gourko with a force to carry out another important movement, and they are allowing Osman, with probably less than 50,000 men, to neutralize a force nearly three times that number, while the fine season which has favoured them in the most extraordinary manner is passing rapidly away. Evidently, if they erred on the side of rashness in September, they are erring on the side of timidity now.

The weather continues remarkably fine. Since the severe storm on November the 27th there has been but one slight shower. The roads all about Plevna are excellent, but down

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near the Danube they are very bad. The ground here is very wet, the nights are cool, and the water freezes, but thaws a few minutes after sunrise.

A correspondent, writing from Turna Marguerelle, on the 3rd of December, shows the difficulty under which outsiders at that date laboured of obtaining accurate information regarding Osman Pacha's chances of holding out. It will also be seen how constantly the strength of the Russian forces was increasing :—

§ The weakest part of the Russian and Roumanian lines at Plevna is defended by no less than sixty-two guns, the fire of which can be concentrated on any spot the Turks may choose for a sortie ; besides this, there is a musketry fire that can only be called murderous. During any night attack, the allied troops have orders to fire horizontally, *raser la terre*, to the ground, and owing to the configuration of the hills, which rise at about the same gradient throughout, this, if carried out, will be most deadly. With regard to the provisions, or rather the want of them, in Plevna, a subject about which everybody speaks most and knows least, and which necessarily is only a matter for conjecture, I was taken to see a Turkish non-commissioned officer on Saturday, the 1st of December, who was captured by the Roumanians during the previous night, whilst trying to stalk a Roumanian horse. He was shown me by a Roumanian officer of the Staff, as a proof of the starving condition the Turks were in. What I saw was a good-looking, thin, wiry man, about 5 feet 9 inches : his clothes torn, and of much too light material for this time of year ; altogether, what I should call a man in hard-training —fit, in racing terms, to "run for his life," and showing not a bit more signs of wear and tear about him than five or six weeks of hard campaigning would warrant.

On Sunday, the 2nd, I saw here in Turna Marguerelle thirty-seven prisoners taken at Plevna by the Roumanians whilst cutting wood outside the Turkish works. I had every opportunity of looking at them as they were being photographed, and were carefully brought out one by one and examined, with a view of getting the worst points of the

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Turks in the best position of the photographs. Among them were two men, both old, wanting in physique, utterly worn out, and suffering, I think, from acute dysentery, their clothes in rags, feet swathed in dirty bandages, and, as they stood ankle-deep in the foul mud, leaning their weary weight against the backs of their stronger comrades who stood in front of them, one's heart sickened at what is truly the saddest picture I have seen of the war. Turning from these to the other side of the group, stands prominent an unmistakable Punjabi, tall, straight as a dart, clean, a soldier every inch, and healthy and well fed to boot. Next to him, scarcely reaching his shoulders, is a light infantry sergeant, the large orange coloured chevrons standing out clean on his arm, his clothes trim, the green braid on his jacket being even fit for parade, his sharp-cut features showing intelligence and health. I have given the best and worst of the thirty-seven; of the rest, some five or six were lame, they had marched thirty-two miles in two days, over very bad roads, the first day in heavy rain; some two or three were sick, and some tired, but in no case were there the tell-tale lines in the hands and neck which I have learnt in my Indian experience so surely denote want of food. Their own account is that bread is growing scarce in Plevna, only one piece being given to each soldier a day, that meat was plentiful, but no wood to cook it with. Hence they were taken prisoners in trying to procure some. All this must be taken with the greatest caution, as, like true Orientals, a Turk quickly divines what his questioner wishes him to say, and as quickly says it with such an air of perfect truth that it is hard to disbelieve even when you know this Eastern peculiarity of his.

The opinion that, at the fall of Plevna, Osman Pacha will be taken prisoner with his whole army, is daily growing more general. That he can break through the Russian and Roumanian works seems almost impossible. Day by day have they been strengthened till, at their weakest spot, sixty-two cannon sweep the ground. Even supposing him through the lines of the allies, without transport, without cavalry, with his troops necessarily disorganized by the performance of such a splendid feat of arms, he would be impeded by

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Russian cavalry and horse artillery till, like the French at Sedan, the moment would come when he could fight no more. As I write, as if to point the argument, the advance guard of what I am told, on the authority of the sub-prefect here, is a Russian army corps 40,000 strong, principally cavalry and artillery, is now passing my window, first a regiment of Cossacks, then two regiments of dragoons, then twelve light field guns, in all about 2,000 men well horsed, well turned out, and fine big fellows. To-night they sleep at Nicopolis. To-morrow, 2,000 more are added to the 120,000 Russians already round Plevna.

The most important in its consequences of all the incidents of the war, was now at hand. The little town which the skill and foresight and undaunted energy of Osman Pacha had converted into a stronghold, capable, month after month, of defying the inexhaustible valour and perseverance of the Russian armies, was at last about to fall, with its gallant remnant of defenders, into the hands of its enemy. Fortunately the incidents of this memorable historical occurrence were destined to be recorded by an eye-witness, experienced in observing and appreciating military events, and capable of bringing them before the eye of the reader in simple but powerful words. Scarcely had intelligence of the FALL OF PLEVNA reached the outside world, when the subjoined copious narratives of the occurrences of the 10th and 11th of December, transmitted from beginning to end by the wires of the electric telegraph, were on their way to London.

† PLEVNA, *December 10th—Night.*—The Russians knew on Friday night that Osman Pacha was preparing for a sortie, and on their part made every preparation to receive him. The trenches were kept full of troops day and night, division and regimental commanders were advised to be on the alert, and all the posts were doubled and trebled. These measures were taken on Friday night, but Saturday passed without any movement being discernible among the Turks. Osman

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Pacha had, however, resolved upon a final effort to break the coils that were crushing him.

Sunday passed in the same way. The Russians were anxiously on the watch with the usual amount of artillery fire, to which the Turks have not replied for a long time. For the last three or four days the weather had been damp and cold, with heavy broken clouds threatening rain, and about noon on Sunday the clouds thickened, and the dark masses discharged themselves in the first snowstorm of the season. By five o'clock the ground was quite white, and the appearance of the country had completely changed.

I rode around the lines between the hours of three and five from Grivica, through Radisovo, to Brestovec, on the Loftcha road. The sky was dark and lowering, but the atmosphere white with thickly-falling snow, through which could be caught glimpses of Plevna, with many little columns of blue smoke rising over it, telling of cooking dinners, and giving it a warm, cosy look, much unlike that of a beleaguered city. The huts of the Russian soldiers were soon white, the soldiers themselves going about joyously, some cooking their dinners, others gathered in groups, singing at the top of their voices a welcome apparently to the first snowfall. Perhaps it reminded them of their far-away homes. There the snow is long since many feet deep. Now and then the boom of a gun, muffled and indistinct like a low growl, broke the stillness as it came through the snow-laden air.

I crossed the ravine at the foot of the Green Hill, where Skobeleff has built an excellent plank bridge, connecting his lines with Zotoff's and Radisovo, and proceeded up the little lateral ravine, along which a good artillery road has been constructed. I soon found myself on the Loftcha road, near Brestovec, in the midst of a violent gust of snow and wind. It was now quite dark. The lights of Brestovec were barely discernible through the gloom, and I had considerable difficulty in finding my way through the storm and the obscurity to Uzendol, Skobeleff's headquarters. Here I found everybody keenly on the alert.

A spy had just come in with the news that Osman had issued three days' rations to the troops, one hundred and fifty

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cartridges, a new pair of sandals to each man, and that, to all appearances, the concentration would begin at once. A curious detail which he cited was that each soldier received a small portion of oil for keeping his gun in order.

At ten o'clock another spy came in, who reported that Osman was concentrating near the bridge over the Vid. The spy had come direct from Plevna, and having given this information he disappeared again in the darkness. A few minutes later there was a telegram stating that from the other side a great many lights were seen moving about in Plevna, an unusual thing. Evidently there was some movement on foot, and the spies were right.

The night wore slowly away. The snowstorm ceased, and was followed by dark clouds scudding swiftly across the sky, with now and then a blast of sleet. At three o'clock another spy brought news that the men of Skobeleff's command had a position on the side of the Green Hill, and that the Krishine redoubts were being abandoned. He was very sure, he said, that all the positions along our side would shortly be abandoned. Would he go along and lead the way into the Krishine redoubts at the risk of being bayoneted if his words should not prove true? Yes, he would, and orders were given by Skobeleff for the troops to begin to move cautiously forward, and feel their way with care. This was done, and the positions were taken.

At last now it was certain that the Turks were moving, and that the final decisive moment had come. Skobeleff ordered the captured positions to be instantly placed in a state of defence, in case the Turks, repulsed and not yet ready to surrender, should attempt to re-capture them. The grey light of morning came. It was cloudy, and threatened more snow. Suddenly there was the booming of thirty or forty guns speaking almost together, followed instantly by that steady, crashing roll we have learned to know so well. The battle had begun. The giant, after defending himself four months, hurling thunderbolt after thunderbolt upon his enemies, was now struggling through the meshes he had allowed to be thrown around him, and was in his turn attacking the trenches and earthworks which he had taught

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his enemies so well how to defend. We mounted our horses and rode towards the battle. It was in the direction of the bridge over the Vid, on the Sofia road, and half an hour's ride brought us in sight of the conflict.

A terrible and sublime spectacle presented itself to our view. The country behind Plevna is a wide open plain, into which the gorge leading up to Plevna opens out like a tunnel. The plain is bounded on the Plevna side by steep rocky bluffs, or cliffs, along whose foot flows the Vid. From these cliffs, for a distance of two miles, burst here and there, in quick, irregular succession, angry spurts of flame, that flashed and disappeared and flashed out again. It was the artillery fire of the Turks and Russians, which, from our point of view, appeared intermingled. The smoke, running round in a circle towards the Vid, rose against the heavy clouds that hung right up on the horizon, while low on the ground burst forth continuous balls of flame that rent the blackness of the clouds like flashes of lightning. Through the covering of smoke could be seen angry spits of fire thick as fireflies on a tropical night. Now and then, through an irregular curving stream of fire we had indistinct glimpses of bodies of men hurrying to and fro, horses, cattle, carriages running across the plain, and, above all, the infernal crashing roll of the infantry fire, and the deep booming of more than a hundred guns.

This is what had happened:

Osman Pacha had during the night abandoned all his positions from Grivica to the Green Hill, and concentrated the greater part of his army across the Vid, over which he passed on two bridges, one the old, and the other the new one lately constructed. He took part of his artillery, some three batteries, and a train of about five or six hundred carriages drawn by bullocks. He succeeded in getting his army, the artillery, and part of the train over by daybreak. The Russians say that to have started with so large a train is a proof that he was deceived with regard to the number of the Russian forces, and that he believed the Russian line, owing to the absence of General Gourko, was very weak on the Sofia road, and thought another road along the Vid was

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virtually open. It does not seem possible that he could have been so badly informed, and I am inclined to think the train was taken to serve a special purpose in the fight. Indeed, the first thing the Russians perceived when daylight broke was a line of waggons drawn by bullocks, advancing upon them in close order across the plain. The smooth open level offered every facility for such a manœuvre. The Turks were behind these waggons, which, piled full of baggage and effects of various kinds, afforded very fair protection from bullets.

The attack was directed against the positions held by the Grenadiers, north of the Sofia road, whose lines extended from the road to a point opposite Opanes, where they were joined by the Roumanian curving line through Susurla. It is said the attack was made with 20,000 men, but I doubt this, as there was really not room for so many to deploy unless they had descended from the heights of Opanes, and taken the Roumanian positions, and I have not heard that they did this. Nor did they even attack the Russian positions south of the road, as they would probably have done had they attacked in such force. At any rate, the attack was a most brilliant and daring one.

The Turks advanced as far as they could under cover of their waggons, while the Russians poured in a terrible fire on them from their Berdan breechloaders, scarcely less destructive than the Peabody, and opened on the advancing line with shell and shrapnel. The Turks then did a splendid piece of bravery, only equalled by Skobeleff's capture of the two famous redoubts. Probably finding their cover beginning to fail them, owing to the cattle being killed get t ing frightened and running away, they dashed forward with a shout upon the line of trenches held by the Sibrersky or Siberian Regiment, swept over them like a tornado, poured into the battery, bayoneted the artillerymen, officers and men, who, with desperate heroism, stood to their pieces to nearly a man, and seized the whole battery. The Sibrersky Regiment had been overthrown and nearly annihilated. The Turks had broken the first circle that held them in. Had they gone on they would have found two more; but they did

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not have time to go on. The Russians rallied almost immediately.

General Strukoff, of the Emperor's staff, brought up the first brigade of Grenadiers, who, led by their general—I forget his name, but the Russians will remember it—flung themselves on the Turks with fury. A hand-to-hand fight ensued, man to man, bayonet to bayonet, which is said to have lasted several minutes, for the Turks clung to the captured guns with dogged obstinacy. They seem to have forgotten in the fury of battle that they had come out to escape from Plevna, and not to take and hold a battery, and they held on to the guns with almost the same desperation which the Russian dead around them had shown a few minutes before. Nearly all the Turks in the battle were killed. Those in the flanking trenches open to the Russian fire had, of course, very little shelter, and were soon overpowered, and began a retreat which, under the murderous fire sent after them, instantly became a flight. Some took shelter behind the broken waggons, and returned the fire for a time, but the majority made for the deep banks of the Vid, where they found ample shelter from the Russian shells and bullets. They formed here behind the banks, and instantly began to return the Russian fire.

It was now about half-past eight, and the Turkish sortie was virtually repulsed, but the battle raged for four hours longer. The losses inflicted from this time forward were not great on either side, for both armies were under cover. The Turks were evidently apprehensive that the Russians would charge and drive them back in a mass into the gorge. The Russians were resolved to prevent another sortie, and so both sides kept it up. Indeed, there seemed at first every probability that the Turks would try it again, though it was evident to any one who knew the strength of the Russian lines and had seen this affair, that escape was hopeless from the first, even though Osman Pacha had had twice the number of men.

For four hours the storm of lead swept on, as 100 guns sent forth flame and smoke and iron. During all this time we were in momentary expectation of seeing one side or the other rush to the charge. We could hardly yet realize that

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this was to be the last fight we should ever see around Plevna, and that when the guns ceased firing it was the last time we should hear them here. It was a strangely impressive spectacle. Behind us, the plain, stretching away to the horizon, dark and sombre, under the dull lead-coloured clouds of the black November day. Before us, the gorge leading up to Plevna, flanked on either side by steep high cliffs, and between us and them the smoke, and roar, and fire of battle filling the air with its mighty thunder, a battle on which hung the fate, not of Plevna, for the long-beleaguered town was already in the hands of the Russians, but of Osman Pacha and his army.

About twelve o'clock the firing began to diminish on both sides, as if by mutual agreement. Then it stopped entirely. The rolling crash of the infantry and the deep-toned bellowing of the artillery were heard no more. The smoke lifted, and there was silence—a silence that will not be broken here for many a long year, perhaps never again, by the sounds of battle.

The firing had not ceased more than half an hour when a white flag was seen waving from the road leading around the cliffs beyond the bridge. Plevna had fallen, and Osman Pacha was going to surrender.

A long, loud shout went up from the Russian army when the white flag was seen, and its significance was understood—a joyous shout that swept over that dreary plain, and was echoed back sonorously by the sullen, rugged cliffs overhanging the scene. The thrill of gladness in the shout showed how deeply the Russian soldiers had dreaded the long, weary waiting through the winter months amid snow and mud round this impregnable stronghold. It was clear that a load had been lifted from every heart.

A moment later, a Turkish officer was seen riding over the bridge with a white flag in his hand. He rode forward to General Ganetsky, in command of the Grenadiers, halted a moment, and then rode back. As it turned out, he was an officer of inferior rank, and returned because General Ganetsky instructed him to send an officer with the rank of pacha

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to negotiate the terms of capitulation. Then thirty or forty of us, headed by General Skobeleff, who had been this morning placed on the Sofia road, rode down the road towards the bridge, within point-blank range of the Turkish rifles, if the Turkish soldiers grouped in masses on the road behind the bridge on the cliffs overlooking the Vid had chosen to open on us. About fifty yards from the bridge, and seventy-five from some masses of Turks on the other side, we halted. General Skobeleff and two or three other officers waved white handkerchiefs. This signal of amity was answered by the waving of a piece of white muslin, about two yards square, attached to a flag-staff. Then two horsemen came forward, each carrying a white flag. They rode across the bridge and approached us. There was a moment's conversation with Skobeleff's interpreter, and then it was announced that Osman himself was coming out, and the two horsemen galloped back.

"Osman himself coming out!" exclaimed all of us with surprise. This was indeed an unlooked-for incident.

"At any rate we will give him a respectful reception," exclaimed one Russian officer, in the gallant spirit of true chivalry.

"That we will," said another. "We must all salute him, and the soldiers must present arms."

"He is certainly a great soldier," exclaimed another, "and he has made an heroic defence."

"He is the greatest general of the age," said General Skobeleff, "for he has saved the honour of his country. I will proffer him my hand and tell him so."

All were unanimous in his praise, and the butcheries of Russian wounded committed by the Turkish army of Plevna were forgotten.

All around me the ground was covered with grim relics of battle. Here and there the earth was uptorn by the explosion of shells. Near me lay a horse groaning and struggling in death. Close by, an ox, silently bleeding to death; his great, round, patient eyes looking mournfully at us. Just before me was a cart with a dead horse lying in yoke as he had fallen, and a Turkish soldier lying alongside whose head

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had been carried away. Another man was lying under the waggon, and aroundw ere four wounded men lying, gazing up at the murky sky, or covered up with the hood of their ragged grey overcoat drawn over their faces. Not one of them uttered a sound. They lay there and bore their sufferings with a calm stolid fortitude which brought tears to my eyes. Just behind the waggon the ground was ripped to pieces by shell-fire, telling how these unfortunates had met their fate. The road and its edges were dotted here and there with dead and wounded Turkish soldiers, oxen, horses, and shattered carts, and a few hundred yards north of the road, the ground over which Osman Pacha's sallying column had made that heroic charge was literally covered with dead and wounded. Russian doctors were already going about on the field looking after the wounded, and giving them temporary dressing, while waiting for the ambulances to come up.

All these things I observed during the pause, which was broken at last by shouts of "There he is! He is coming!" and I rode forward again to the point of main interest. Two horsemen were again approaching with a white flag, the bearer of which was apparently merely a common soldier. He wore a fez, a long dirty brown cloak, and very ragged footgear. The other horseman wore a bright red fez, which set off the officer's blue cloak. He was clean and natty, and had on fresh gloves. He was comparatively young, with a round, rosy face, clean shaved, light moustache, straight nose, and blue eyes. He did not seem over thirty-five years old.

"This cannot be Osman Pasha," was the general exclamation. In fact it was not he, but Tefik Bey, his chief of staff. Was it possible that this boyish-looking face belonged to Osman's right-hand man, who must have played so great a part in the organization and maintenance of Osman's mighty defence? It seemed strange, but it was true. The Turks have the merit at least of not being afraid of young men. I saw no tottering grey-bearded officers in this captive host. Every one on our side saluted as Tefik Bey rode up. He halted for a moment and was silent. He then spoke in French with good accent, but slowly, as if choosing his words.

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He said "Osman Pacha"—then stopped fully ten seconds before he proceeded—"is wounded."

This was the first intimation we had had of this occurrence. All expressed their regret.

"Not severely, we all hope?" exclaimed General Skobeleff.

"I do not know," was the answer, with a pause of a second between every word.

"Where is his Excellency?" was the next question.

"There," was Tefik Bey's reply, as he pointed to a small house overlooking the road just beyond the bridge.

Then there was a pause while we scrutinized our strange visitor, and he surveyed us, as it seemed to me, with the most perfect calmness, but obvious curiosity. The pause became embarrassing. The Turk showed no hurry to speak, and the Russians evidently felt delicacy in asking if he had come to surrender; besides which, there really was no officer there who had the right to treat with him. The situation was critical, and if it possessed an amusing element was also embarrassing. Both armies were watching us, not more than 500 yards apart, with arms in their hands, for the Russian infantry had gradually moved down toward the bridge. Finally, General Skobeleff stammered out, "Is there anybody you would like to see?—[pause]—With whom did you wish to speak?—Is there anything—— ?—[pause]—What the devil is the matter with the man? Why don't he speak?" blurted out the General, in English, turning to me. Tefik Bey remained impassive. I have seen more of him since, and I find he is singularly and habitually taciturn, but I believe his extreme taciturnity on this occasion was partly owing to emotion, in spite of the steady, inflexible front he maintained.

"General Ganetsky is in command here. He will be here presently, in case you should like to speak to him," General Skobeleff finally observed. Tefik Bey simply nodded.

"Osman Ghazi has made a most brilliant and glorious defence," said an officer. "We esteem highly his soldierly character."

The Turk gazed steadily before him, and gave no sign that he had heard.

"We look upon him as a very great general," said another. No answer. The Turk's eyes were bent in the direction of

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Sofia, as though looking for Mehemet Ali Pacha. There was evidently no use trying to converse with this obstinately silent man, and they gave it up. Fortunately, General Strukoff, of the Emperor's staff, soon arrived, with powers to treat. He asked Tefik if he had authority from Osman Pacha to negotiate. It appeared not. I did not catch all that was said; but the final result was that Tefik bowed to us and galloped away back across the bridge.

We waited awhile longer. Some of the Turks on the bridge walked forward, and came on to us, some with guns hung over their shoulders, others with guns in their hands. They walk about us and examine us curiously. Thousands of them are on the cliffs, not more than fifty yards distant, looking down on us with composure, all with arms in their hands. One well-directed volley would thin our Russian cadres this side of the Vid very appreciably, for by this time there must have been a hundred officers gathered here, and the capitulation was by no means arranged as yet. On the heights to our right we see the Russians moving up to the redoubt on one side, while the Turks were leaving it on the other. Presently General Ganetsky arrives, and then the way is blocked with waggons, dead horses and oxen. The men have all been carried off, but beside the waggon near the bridge I see one young fellow lying wounded. He has laid himself carefully down there, with his cloak wrapped around him, and his rifle and knapsack under his head. He evidently takes pride in his gun, a Peabody, for it is very bright and clean, and he has put it carefully under him, so that it may not be taken away. He did not think to part with it so soon. He is scarcely seventeen, and the doctor who has dressed his wounds says he will not live till night.

We thread our way cautiously over the bridge, through broken carriages and dead bodies of horses and cattle, and find ourselves among the Turks. There are several dead lying in the ditch beside the road. Some wounded are limping along with us, going Heaven knows whither, and there are two sentinels standing in a trench overlooking the river, keeping their watch as though they were looking for an attack at any moment.

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As we advance the crowd gets thicker. The Turkish soldiers, with guns and bayonets in their hands, men at whom we have been shooting, and who were shooting at us two hours ago, gaze at us with a scowl, some with a savage expression, but there are pleasant intelligent faces also, which look at us with steady, clear, inquisitive eyes. General Skobeleff, sen., recalled an episode of the Hungarian insurrection resembling this, where there was an armistice, and a great number of Austrian officers crossed over the bridge to the Hungarians as we did here, when the Hungarian commanding officer opened his ranks and fired his cannon, charged to the muzzle with mitraille, on the Austrians. Let us hope the two incidents will not resemble each other in all respects.

When the General is about a hundred yards from the bridge the crush is so great that we can advance no further, and indeed we do not wish, for it is in this little house overlooking the road that Osman Ghazi lies wounded. Generals Ganetsky, Strukoff, and some others have gone to see him. I was unable to get in owing to the crowd. The conference did not last more than a few minutes.

The terms of capitulation were easily arranged. The surrender is unconditional. Osman consented at once. If surprise be expressed that he should have so suddenly agreed, it is only necessary to state that he could do nothing else. In order to attempt a sortie, he had to abandon all the positions in which he had defied the Russians so long, and to concentrate his army down on the Vid. These positions once lost were lost for ever, because the Russians occupied them almost as soon as he left them. He was down in the valley; they on the surrounding hills, with an army three times as large as his. He had to surrender without delay, for they were drawing the circle tighter every moment. His position was like Napoleon III.'s at Sedan. The disparity in numbers was greater, and he had not even the shelter of the village. So Osman Ghazi, the Victorious, surrendered unconditionally the gallant army with which he had held this now famous stronghold for so long, with which he upset the whole Russian plan of campaign, and with which he defeated, in three pitched battles, Russia's finest armies.

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We turned back and over the bridge, and Osman Pacha got into a carriage and drove to Plevna. The Grand Duke Nicholas, with his staff, arrived a few minutes afterwards, and passed the troops in review. He was received with cheers. Halting, he spoke a few words to the Grenadiers which were greeted with the wildest acclamation. The Grand Duke has certainly the soldierly quality of knowing how to speak to soldiers. Then we pass again slowly across the bridge.

The scene had now changed. No more armed Turks were to be seen. The interview with Osman Pacha had taken place about two o'clock. It was now three, and the Turks had all laid down their arms. They had obeyed the injunction literally, and each man had simply laid his rifle down in the mud where he was standing when the order reached him. The ground was littered with arms, the same Peabody-Martinis that had wrought such destruction in the Russian ranks in July and September. The road lay thick with them, and we rode over them, trampling them under our horses' feet and spoiling hundreds of them. Osman's army was not, however, all armed with Peabodys. I observed some Sniders, and a good many Krankas, evidently taken from the battle-fields of July and September.

We rode slowly on towards Plevna, with the low hills on our right sloping up toward Krishine, and a valley on our left beyond which rose the heights of Oopanez. Soon we came to a mass of bullock-waggons composing the train to accompany the intended sortie. There must have been five or six hundred, and I observed a considerable number that seemed to belong to private persons, for they were full of household effects, and Turkish women and children. It made one shudder to think of these tender little ones within the zone of that terrible circle of fire, and I was glad to think that none of these private vehicles had probably even got so far as the bridge. One hideously ugly old woman apostrophized us in good round plain-spoken terms, and evidently regarded us with venomous hatred. Nobody paid any attention to her clamour, but a batch of Turkish soldiers as she raved discovered some curd cheese in her waggon, which they seized and devoured greedily, bringing down on themselves her railings.

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There was another halt in our slow onward progress, and the cry was heard, "Osman." I pushed forward to find that it was indeed Osman Pacha, who, having heard that the Grand Duke was coming in this direction, had turned back in his carriage to meet him. Osman Pacha was escorted by fifty Cossacks, and there followed him twenty-five or thirty Turkish officers, all mounted on diminutive Turkish ponies. They were all, or nearly all, young men. Scarcely one among them seemed over thirty. Most had the faces of mere boy students. "Are these the lads," I inwardly exclaimed, "with whom Osman Pacha has accomplished such wonders?" The Grand Duke rode up to the carriage, and, for some seconds, the two chiefs gazed into each other's faces without the utterance of a word. Then the Grand Duke stretched out his hand, and shook the hand of Osman Pacha heartily and said:—

"I compliment you on your defence of Plevna. It is one of the most splendid military feats in history." Osman Pacha smiled sadly, rose painfully to his feet in spite of his wound, said something which I could not hear, and then re-seated himself. The Russian officers all cried, "Bravo!" "Bravo!" repeatedly, and all saluted respectfully. There was not one among them who did not gaze on the Hero of Plevna with the greatest admiration and sympathy. Prince Charles, who had arrived, rode up, and repeated unwittingly almost every word of the Grand Duke, and likewise shook hands. Osman Pacha again rose and bowed, this time in grim silence.

He wore a loose blue cloak, with no apparent mark on it to designate his rank, and a red fez. He is a large, strongly-built man, the lower part of whose face is covered with a short black beard, without a streak of grey. He has a large Roman nose, and black eyes. The face is a strong face, with energy and determination stamped on every feature—yet a tired, wan face, also, with lines on it that hardly were graven so deep I fancy five months ago; and with a sad, enduring, thoughtful look out of the black eyes.

"It is a grand face," exclaimed Colonel Gaillard, the French military attaché. "I was almost afraid of seeing him lest

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my expectation should be disappointed, but he more than fulfils my ideal."

"It is the face of a great military chieftain," said young Skobeleff. "I am glad to have seen him. Osman Ghazi he is, and Osman the Victorious he will remain, in spite of his surrender."

There may perhaps be exaggeration in the Russian estimate of Osman Pacha. History will judge. But, thrilling with the impression of the great military event just accomplished, the magnificent defence ending in a halo of disastrous glory, there was not one of us who did not echo Skobeleff's words. Be it remembered that Osman Pacha cannot be judged on ordinary military rules for the reason that he had not a regular army; technically speaking, not an army at all, but a mob of armed men, with scarcely any organization, with no discipline, save the natural and passive obedience of the Turkish peasant, and only such military education and experience as were gained in the trenches and on the battle-field. This is the highest form of generalship, to accomplish mighty results with means which most military men would have regarded as hopelessly inadequate. Osman Pacha had scarcely any officers of talent and experience with him. He has borne the weight of this stupendous defence on his own shoulders, a very Titan, defying, with his untrained and scanty levies, the serried legions of one of the greatest military powers of Europe.

I rode through the Turkish troops after the surrender, when I had time to examine them closely. There were bad, vile faces among the horde, but there were also many bright faces, in whose eyes was no murderous glare. I shall never forget the face of one young officer who, with folded arms, stood a prisoner among his men, gazing at us with a look of fierce defiant hate, that was softened by profound despair. The men all wore dirty brown cloaks, with hoods pulled down over their heads and very ragged foot-gear. They seemed ill-fed and were mostly miserably bedraggled and tattered, yet, withal, each man was a hero in our eyes when we thought of the successive episodes of the long-protracted defence of Plevna,

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from the repulse of Schilder-Schuldner to the final desperate struggle to break the iron band of environment.

In the following letter the same Correspondent continues his narrative of this memorable episode in the war :—

† PLEVNA, *December 11th.*—Osman Pacha, during the whole time of the siege of Plevna, up to the last day, lived in a tent, although there are a great many comfortable, even fine, houses in the town. A true soldier, he preferred being almost as much exposed to the inclemency of the weather as his own soldiers in the trenches. Osman, I am told, asked to be allowed to pass the night in Plevna, but as his tent had been struck, a house was given to him. Thus his last night in Plevna was the first passed under a roof.

After his meeting with Osman, the Grand Duke rode on to Plevna. By the time we reached the town it was nearly dark, and it presented a most miserable, wretched appearance. Not that there were any ruins to contemplate, for the Russians did not probably throw above a dozen shells into this part of the town during the whole time of the siege, but narrow, crooked streets, a foot deep with thin liquid mud, in which thousands of men and horses were wandering about without apparently knowing where to go, and without any object; lean, cadaverous-looking inhabitants who stood outside their doors, and saluted us timidly as we passed, as though not quite sure that the Turks might not yet come out and catch them at it, and looking in the gloaming more like spectres than anything else; houses in which were seen no lights nor fires, cold, comfortless, and deserted, made up a scene that, in the gathering darkness of a bleak December evening, was dreary and depressing in the extreme.

I had attached myself to General Skobeleff, and while riding through the streets on our way to our old quarters on the Loftcha road, we met Tefik Bey, Osman's chief of staff, the same who had come over the bridge to us with the white flag. He had become separated from Osman, and was wandering about with his escort through the muddy streets, nobody seeming to know where to take him or where to go. General Skobeleff immediately invited him to dine and pass the night

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at his headquarters on the Loftcha road. Tefik Bey at first hesitated, as he thought he ought to endeavour to join Osman, but nobody knew where Osman was. It seemed then probable that he had accompanied the Grand Duke to Bogot, and, at any rate, if he were in Plevna, the task of finding him might be one of hours in the darkness. General Skobeleff's persuasions, joined to those of Colonel Gaillard, whom Skobeleff had likewise invited, finally prevailed.

We then proceeded on our way up the Loftcha road. We passed under the two redoubts taken by Skobeleff in September, now silent and deserted, up across the Green Hill, across the labyrinth of trenches and works where, only twenty-four hours before, the Turks and Russians were still standing foot to foot and bayonet to bayonet. All now was silent and lonely. Arriving on the top of the hill, we saw the lights of Brestovec gleaming on our right, and a short gallop brought us to Uzendol, General Skobeleff's present headquarters.

A warm fire burning gaily in General Skobeleff's mud hut, a glass of vodka, and some hot soup at once thawed out our benumbed hands and feet, and we were soon enjoying a hot dinner, with the appetites of men who had been in the saddle since daylight, with not a morsel to eat. Tefik Bey seemed much depressed and downcast. He spoke little, and was at first almost as taciturn as he had been on the bridge. He brightened up, however, as the meal progressed, drank a glass of red wine, a glass of sherry, and a couple of glasses of champagne, when General Skobeleff proposed the health of Osman Ghazi, and drank to the brave defenders of Plevna. A merry smile broke over his face when Skobeleff asked him who had commanded the Turks on the Green Hill, and I think it must have occurred to him now for the first time that his entertainer was Skobeleff, the indefatigable, restless, daring spirit with whom he had exchanged so many hard blows on the Loftcha Road and Green Hill. Nobody had mentioned Skobeleff's name in his presence, nor had Skobeleff told him who he was, but the fact that we had come out of the Loftcha Road, together with Skobeleff's question about the Green Hill, was quite enough to enlighten him. So he said, with a smile, "Ah, it is you who gave such tough work on the Green Hill

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all this time. You are General Skobeleff." Skobeleff laughed, and said, "Yes." "That was a very good attack of yours that evening in the fog and darkness. Very well done. But you did not get it all." "No," said Skobeleff, "I did not want it all." And they both laughed. But, after this momentary fit of sunshine, Tefik Bey soon again relapsed into melancholy and gloom. It was partly the despondency and sadness natural under the circumstances, partly the reaction on the extreme excitement and tension of nerves during the last few days when preparing for the sortie, and partly extreme lassitude and fatigue. We had hardly swallowed our coffee when Skobeleff, taking pity on him, turned us all out, gave up his bed to Tefik, had another hastily made up for Colonel Gaillard, and then retired and passed the night in a hut of one of his officers; and so ended this eventful day on our side of Plevna.

A visit to the positions showed, what I have always maintained, that the Russian artillery was practically useless, although the ground in many places was ploughed up with shells, better than the Bulgarian peasant ever ploughs it. The parapets and trenches showed no signs of shells having struck them. The fact is, one man can repair all the damage done to an earthwork by one gun, and have plenty of time to sleep and smoke besides. The Turks, everything considered, were not badly off in the trenches. They had constructed little huts all along them under cover of parapets bullet-proof, and for the most part shell-proof. Here they cooked, ate, slept, and had only to step outside their doors in case of an attack and seize their rifles, which were always lying ready loaded across the parapets. Colonel Gaillard told me he had observed many masked dummy figures with the fez on, which the Turks had evidently used to draw the enemy's fire. This mask would be shown over the parapet, while three or four Turkish sharpshooters took up their stations a few feet on each side of it. The Russian on the look out, and seeing this figure, would fire at it, thus exposing himself to the bullets of the sharpshooters on either side, whom he would not have remarked.

As regards the condition of Plevna, I know nothing about the

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amount of provisions the inhabitants still had. I think they must have been nearly at the end of their supplies; but as regards the military supplies, my belief is that Osman still had enough to hold the place three weeks longer. There were at least one thousand head of cattle yoked to the waggons of the train that attempted a sortie. There was a certain number of horses, perhaps two or three hundred, some flour and rice, though I am unable to say how much. Tefik Bey acknowledged they had still supplies for the week. Under these circumstances it may be asked if Osman did not make a mistake in attempting a sortie now instead of three weeks later, when he might have made the attempt with equal chances of success. His duty was to hold the Russians here as long as possible. In three weeks the weather might so have changed as to prevent the Russians from attempting a march on Adrianople until next spring, which would have given Mehemet Ali time to organize the army he is now trying to form. If Osman could have held out a month longer it might have altered the situation very materially in favour of the Turks.

On the other hand, several reasons have been offered to explain the attempt to break out at present, either of which would be sufficient to justify Osman. It only remains to ascertain which of these reasons decided him to act. In the first place, I have heard it said, though I have not had time to investigate the report before leaving, that an epidemic, something resembling plague, had broken out in the town, which threatened in a few days to spread and annihilate the whole population and army as well. When we remember that some thousands of dead bodies were left to lie and rot around Plevna, the condition of the hospitals, of the wounded and the sick, the privations and the destitution of part of the inhabitants, the report is by no means improbable, and such a danger would justify Osman in attempting a sortie, while he yet had an army with which to do it; for the impression is general—and this is the second reason given for making the attempt—that Osman really hoped to break through. It was no mere dash made with the intention of saving military honour in order to capitulate afterwards, but a genuine effort in which

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he flung his force against the Russian lines in the hope of breaking them with one mighty blow.

It is thought he was deceived; that he believed Gourko's departure with the Guard had so weakened the Russian line that he had a fair chance of success. There was some ground for this belief, because Gourko has, it can do no harm to say so now, over 30,000 men of the best troops of the Russian army of the Guard. Osman might easily know of the departure of Gourko. It would be difficult for him to ascertain with what force he had been replaced. The only means of ascertaining whether the barrier before him was a solid wall, or only a curtain, was by driving his sword through it. How mighty was the blow he struck I have already described. The chances to a man inside Plevna may have appeared in favour of success in a sortie, and the moment most favourable for attempting it.

As to Gourko's army, he evidently hoped to avoid it by striking for Widdin. Finally, another reason given for Osman's attempt is, orders from Constantinople to cut his way out at all hazards. Such an order would, of course, notify Osman as to the difficulty of such an order reaching him. That would have been easy enough. If the Russians had caught a man carrying such an order through their lines, they would have set him at liberty, and sent him on his way rejoicing. They would willingly have transmitted the order to Osman had the occasion presented. Thus there is no doubt that if the order were sent from Constantinople Osman is sure to have received it. This, therefore, may account for his attempt. It was evidently a mistake on the part of Osman to make the attempt now instead of waiting until he had only three days' rations left, but it does not appear that it was a mistake he could have avoided, or for which he is responsible.

A few notes from another Correspondent will complete the story of the fall of Plevna:—

§ *December 15th.*—Yesterday 58,000 Russian and 12,000 Roumanian troops formed up in two lines of quarter columns on the battle-field of Plevna for inspection by the Emperor,

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who was received with the greatest enthusiasm by all. He was accompanied by the Grand Duke, Prince Charles, and a brilliant staff. On arrival, he embraced General Witrinsky and General Daniloff, who commanded the reserve which came to the rescue, and the line which received the Turkish attack. The Emperor shook hands with Captain Granatichesk, of the Roumanian artillery, who rendered good service on the same day.

As the parade formed, a few wounded Turks were found who had survived four days without food or water and exposed to the cold.

Forty thousand Russians leave to-day for Orkanieh. There is great mortality among the Turkish prisoners. Many Turkish dead are still unburied.

Now that the allies have triumphed here, hopes for peace prevail in both armies.

It is here of interest to note that, about this time, the *North German Gazette* published an elaborate statistical paper showing the strength and positions of the military forces now contending in Turkey. According to this paper, the Russo-Roumanian army under the command of Prince Charles of Roumania consists of 119,000 men with 558 field guns; the forces in the Balkans, 30,000 men with 162 guns; the army on the Lom under the Czarewitch of 73,000 men with 432 guns; and the forces in the Dobrudscha and Eastern Roumania, 38,000 men with 440 guns. The Turkish army is composed:—First, of the forces in Western Bulgaria, 92,000 men with 132 guns (including Osman Pacha's army, 50,000 men) and 4,000 irregulars; secondly, the forces in the Balkans, 26,000 men with 76 guns and a number of mortars, and 3,000 irregulars; thirdly the army in the Quadrilateral and in the Dobrudscha, including the garrisons, 135,000 men with 386 guns, and about 60,000 irregulars.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE PAUSE IN GENERAL GOURKO'S ADVANCE.

News from Constantinople.—Proposal to enrol Christian Recruits.—The Gendarmerie Scheme.—The Projected Civic Guard.—Baker Pacha.—Case of the Geshoffs.—Treatment of Bulgarian Prisoners.—Want of Horses.—Censorship of the Newspapers.—The Armenian Community.—Regulations proposed by the Greek Patriarch.—Feeling of the Greeks.—The Sultan's Patronage of the Greeks.—The Circular Despatch.—Desire for Peace.—The Servians.—Danube: Accident to the Bridge of Boats.—Advance of General Gourko to Orkanieh.—The Little Village of Lezan.—Superiority of the Turkish Works.—Description of Orkanieh.—An Unexpected Communication.—Rejoicings over the Fall of Plevna.—Curious Craving for Sugar.—Hard Times for the Guard.—The Sutler's Shop.—The Poor "Bratouschka."—Flight of the Turks from Orkanieh.—Positions of the two Armies.—An Arctic Landscape.

FROM the following letter from a correspondent in Constantinople, the reader will gather an idea of the state of feeling, and the condition of affairs in Constantinople on the eve of events so disastrous to the Turkish cause:—

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *November 30th.*—It is again announced that Christians are to be added to the army. As your readers will recollect, the Government issued a notice some months ago that this was to be done. The Armenian and the Greek Patriarchs protested, and the project was of course not carried out. It had, however, served its turn, and the Government was no doubt considerably the richer for the proposal. It was, indeed, regarded in Constantinople simply as a device to obtain additional contributions from the Christians. The new proposal differs somewhat from the old. A "civic guard" is to be formed, composed without distinction of all subjects of the Sultan. The Imperial decree has been promulgated, its rules drawn up, and in any other country but this there would be little doubt of its being carried into execution. In spite, however, of all the provisions of the decree, one may be

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allowed to be sceptical as to the formation of such a body even in Constantinople.

Before the war began, I urged that the employment of Christians in the army upon the same condition as Mussulmans was one of the very few reforms which would have given equality to the subject races of the Empire. My argument was that, as it is dangerous to illtreat a man with a bayonet in his hand, the Moslem population would gradually learn to drop their habits of petty and annoying tyranny, and to regard Christians as men who meant to have, and would have, equal treatment and justice with themselves. Had Turkey chosen to consent to the terms offered her at the Conference, an acceptance of this—one of the proposed terms—might possibly have led to the object which the Sultan, at least, is said to have at heart, the uniting together of the two hitherto absolutely opposing elements of which his Empire is composed. The Turks, however, were unwilling and probably afraid to admit the Christians to their army then. Let me add that, evidently from their own point of view they are right. The Turks know as well as anybody else that their domination will be at an end from the time they allow arms to be put into the hands of the Christians. Like other mortals, the Turks wish to stick to power as long as possible. I have never seen a sign of any willingness on the part of the Turks to admit Christians to equality. On the contrary, I have myself seen much in various parts of the Empire, and have heard much from persons who have been in every part of the Empire, which leads me to believe there would be violent opposition to any serious attempt to introduce religious equality. I believe, too, that among those who would otherwise be willing to allow Christians to enter the army on equal terms with themselves, there is fear of what the result might be.

We heard much during the American war of the arming of the slaves to fight against the North. We may hear a good deal more of the arming of the Christian races, but the talk in each case will, I believe, end in talk, at any rate until the war is over. Like every foreigner resident in Constantinople, I should be glad to see the civic guard, as proposed in the

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Imperial decree, formed into an existing soldiery. There would certainly be less fear of a Moslem disturbance directed against the Christian quarters if it were known that a civic guard, composed about equally of Moslems and Christians, was ready to put down any attempts at disorder, whether made by disorderly Turks or by disorderly Christians. The scheme is, in fact, almost as good as the still more elaborate one which I described some months ago as having been drawn up by Baker Pacha, for a gendarmerie throughout the Empire. No step has, however, been taken to form the latter, except what was done right off. Baker Pacha and his staff were chosen, and there the matter dropped. The head has been fighting with Suleiman, and, after a few days passed in Constantinople, has started to Sofia to join Mehemet Ali. Some of his staff are, I believe, with him. The rest have nothing to do, and are doing it ornamentally and pleasantly, I hope, for themselves in Constantinople. But for all practical purposes the scheme has not been carried into execution. As the employment of Christians in military service was solemnly promised in the famous Hatt of 1856, and on several occasions since, Europeans are not called upon to believe that the promise will be fulfilled until they see something more than the Imperial regulations. Indeed, what is said openly about it is very probably correct, that it is intended mainly as an answer to Russia when she declares that she will insist upon the grant of equality to the Christians. Besides, it has the additional advantage which is the key to the motives of so many Turkish paper reforms, and which may be summed up in the words of the Biglow papers—"It makes us more highly thought on abroad."

The Imperial order for the formation of this Civic Guard consists of twenty-two articles, and contains amongst others the following propositions:—The service is to be obligatory for all those over seventeen who have not yet been inscribed on the conscription roll, and for all those on that roll who have not been drawn. Any who may be subsequently drawn will have to leave the ranks of the Civic Guard. The only persons exempted are to be members of the Imperial family, Cabinet Ministers, Senators, and Deputies, with certain

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officers belonging to the Civil Service and the Ulemas. The design of the Guard is said to be to defend the country, and to maintain order provisionally in the absence of regular troops. Their sole mission is defence. If they wish, they may be sent to war, either incorporated among the regular troops or separately. The Government is to have the right of calling them out when it thinks fit. They are, of course, to be under military rule, and during ordinary times are to be assimilated to ordinary subjects. Those who do not present themselves when called upon are, as punishment, to be sent as simple recruits into the regular army. Lastly, they are to have a special flag given to them—not this time consisting of a cross between two crescents, but ornamented with the "toughra" Imperial and the insignia of the "Osmanie." To-day the proposal has been submitted to the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs. On the last occasion they protested stoutly against it, though there is reason to believe that in case of peace they would have no objection to come to an arrangement by which those under their spiritual control should serve in the army. I anticipate that they will again object.

The telegraph will already have informed you that the Geshoffs have been so far released that they have been allowed to go to live in Kadiquoy, a suburb of Scutari. They are not to leave this village, and an officer of Government is to live in the house with them to keep watch over their proceedings. The family of the Geshoffs is one which has lived for fifty years in Bulgaria in good repute for honesty and good conduct. Possessed of considerable wealth they are not the stuff of which conspirators are usually made. All, moreover, whom I have met with who know them, say that they are essentially quiet men who have attended to their business, and who would not be in the least likely to interfere in political questions. The real fault attributed to them is that they are supposed to have given information to Lady Strangford, Mr. Baring, Mr. Schuyler, and your Special Commissioner. The house consists of four brothers, the youngest of whom was, I am informed, in business at Manchester. The other three resided at Philippopolis. Two sons of one of these brothers were the

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first arrested, and were kept in prison for three months without any examination or charge being brought against them. In passing I may be allowed to doubt whether it was not a misfortune that their case should have been taken up by their friends in England. They are men of considerable wealth, and a portion of this, disposed of in the fashion every one born in Turkey and having had dealings with the Turkish authorities understands would, I have no doubt whatever, have got them released. Still, as one of these young men had been appointed United States Consul in Philippopolis, it was inevitable that there should be interference. Moreover, hangings were going on so recklessly during the worse than bloody assize which followed the brave operations of the Turkish regulars and irregulars against the Bulgarians, that some of their friends here were naturally unwilling to risk the chance of a release by backsheesh. After the sons had been three months in prison, the three elder members of the family, aged respectively seventy-five, seventy, and sixty, were likewise imprisoned. This was on the 9th of the present month. Their families also were ordered to be ready to leave next day. This notification was carried into effect, and thus on the 10th the three old men, with their wives, their children, and grandchildren, down to an infant in arms, and their men and women servants, were sent off in a body to Constantinople. The American Legation has done its best for the unfortunate family, and insisted that they should not be banished to Aleppo, as was at first proposed.

I have taken the above facts from a memorial which has been presented to the various Embassies and Legations in Constantinople. They afford a fair typical instance of the mode of procedure with model subjects. There has been no charge brought against them, not the slightest pretext of a trial, but they are suspected persons. Some of the family narrowly escaped hanging. The whole of them are practically ruined by being taken from their business and their property. If such things are done to a family possessing friends who can interest Lord Derby in their behalf, having a member who had received the appointment of American Consul, and therefore having the support—and a generous support it has been—

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of the American Legation, what chance is there of justice to Bulgarians less favourably situated? Bands of other Bulgarian prisoners continue to arrive in Constantinople, to be sent hence in banishment to various parts of the Empire. Their condition is sad in the extreme. They are cold, hungry, and mostly ill-clad. Moreover, there are among them old men, who in the natural course of things cannot live beyond a few months, and there are many lads whose appearance gives one the impression that they are not more than twelve or thirteen years old. From some districts it is evident that the authorities have determined to get rid of the whole of the inhabitants. This day week such a band arrived in Stamboul. Mr. Barrington Kennet, and another gentleman who is acting for the Stafford House Committee, were on the spot; and though their special business was to provide food for the sick and wounded soldiers who arrived, yet, with the instincts of English gentlemen, when they saw these half-starved wretches who had come from Philippopolis, and who declared that they had had no food either on the road or for hours before starting, they attempted to give them soup and bread. The soldiers, however, refused to allow their prisoners to receive anything. In vain were they remonstrated with, and even abused, as they deserved: the prisoners were Bulgarians, and might starve, but they should have no food; and at length these gentlemen had to cease their efforts, because the soldiers threatened to break the vessel containing the soup if the attempt were renewed.

December 4th.—The Greek Patriarch has communicated through the usual ecclesiastical authorities the Sultan's decree for the formation of a National Guard. The Armenian Patriarch and the Bulgarian Exarch will do the same. They have no objection to military service for the preservation of order locally.

December 7th.—The Government has notified to the Tramways Company at Constantinople that the urgent need of obtaining artillery horses makes it necessary that the company should surrender to the military authorities its stock of 280

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horses still retained in working the tramways. The company, in reply, says that this will prove the ruin of an industrial association, and reduce to distress numerous families.

The following letter from the same pen shows how eagerly intelligence regarding the rumoured fall of Plevna and the capture of Osman Pacha and his army, was expected in the Turkish capital.

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 12th.*—The great point of interest to us all here has been whether Plevna will be taken. To-day the news has arrived that it has been taken. Only the Embassies have received telegrams, and our information is of the smallest.

How strong the interest has been may be gathered from the fact that hardly a day has passed without rumours in regard to it obtaining general belief. A week ago we were told on every hand that Osman had capitulated. Then the rumour ran that he had made a terrific attempt to break out, had lost half his men, but had succeeded in getting free. For six hours at least the only point which remained open to discussion was whether he had taken himself to Rahova or to Loftcha. It would be idle, however, to attempt to gather up the various rumours which pass for facts here, and which the lively imagination of the population twist into a great variety of shapes. As I have previously stated, the latest source of our information upon what is going on north of the Balkans is the Press of Athens. The Government has apparently come to the same conclusion, and accordingly issued a notice prohibiting the importation of Greek newspapers. The prohibition is altogether a characteristic one. Its effect may be to diminish the number of papers which come in, but certainly not to keep out news. As, moreover, the Press department has not forbidden the publication of telegrams taken from foreign newspapers, the result is that the local newspapers make careful extracts from the Greek papers, which in spite of Governmental prohibition manage to come into their hands, and publish them for the benefit of their readers. The result is one which is perfectly well known to the censor-

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ship in regard to books also. The importation of certain books is rigidly forbidden. Still, though our number of booksellers is very small, any one who wishes to buy a prohibited book will be pretty sure to find it at the first bookshop he enters, and probably displayed in the shop window.

As the Government has a monopoly of the telegraph, it can of course stop the entry of a considerable quantity of news. The effect, however, is not to keep from us the whole of the facts, but rather, I imagine, to give us inaccurate instead of exact versions of what has taken place. Private telegrams are allowed to pass, and if a merchant hears from London or Vienna that "John Smith is dead," or that "There is no demand for coals in Newcastle," the telegraph official may be excused for not suspecting that one means that "Kars has fallen," and the other that "It is rumoured that Osman has tried to get out of Plevna." The truth is that the whole system of trying to hide the truth is simply childish. It fails in its object, and by the very secrecy in transmission which has to be resorted to, gives rise to wild, exaggerated, and prolonged rumours, which do more to disquiet the public mind than the publication of the truth would do.

During the last week we have had almost a deluge of rain. Usually we have fine weather throughout European Turkey in December, but this month appears to be an exception. The cry amongst the Turks is that the weather is still fighting for Mahomet, and if a continuance of wet which has kept the country in one long soak is to be attributed to the Prophet's influence, they are right. The registers in the capital showed that by the 1st of October we had had more than the average annual rainfall, and there is, I believe, now no doubt that the year's record will show the heaviest rainfall that has yet been registered.

The jealousy which led to the dismissal of Mehemet Ali from the command of the army of the Lom has not allowed him to remain with that which he has done a good deal to form at Sofia. It was announced yesterday that he is to be sent to Montenegro, which is generally regarded as practical banishment. However, none but well-wishers to Turkish arms need regret the change. Among the military officers

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attached to the various embassies here he is regarded as altogether the ablest soldier now in command.

The admission of Christians to the Civic Guard has caused a considerable amount of excitement. Mr. Layard, rightly or wrongly, has the credit of having advised the Porte to this step. Many of the Turks are opposed to it, and equally again it has not found favour with the Christians. I adhere to my prediction that the proposal has not the slightest chance of being carried into effect. If it is adopted anywhere it will be in the capital. The boundaries of the district of Constantinople will be the utmost extent of its adoption. There will certainly be no objection whatever on the part of the Christians of Smyrna, of Thessaly, and Epirus to military service for local protection, and the Turks are far too wide-awake to their own interests not to know why. In the capital, however, notwithstanding the consent which a few highly-placed Christians gave to the proposal, and in spite of the sound argument, as it seems to me, that there will be great advantage in case of disturbances here in having a body of Christians with arms in their hands bound to preserve order, the poorer classes both of Greeks and Armenians will have nothing to do with military service if they can help it. They have no confidence that if once enrolled they will not be sent to fight the Russians, and they have no stomach for such a fight. The war is not theirs, and they do not know what Moslem officers would do, once they were under military control. The men of the provinces, too, have paid *haratch*, or exemption money, all their lives in lieu of military service, and do not see why they should be called upon to serve as well. One of the Constantinople newspapers suggested on Saturday last that the fair thing to do was to pay the exemption money back. Military service, moreover, even two years ago, might not have been unwelcome to the Christian communities, but there is a natural objection to being called upon under present circumstances.

On Friday last the religious assembly of the Armenian community met to consider the Ministerial order by which the Porte had communicated this new reform of admitting

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Christians into the Civic Guard. The Patriarch Narses was in the chair. Several speakers, mostly in the Turkish service, spoke in favour of giving a vote of thanks to the Government for its proposal. No resolution, however, was come to. Outside the room where the meeting was being held, a large crowd, estimated at not less than two thousand Armenians, had assembled, and did their best to intimate to their representatives in the religious assembly of the community that they were opposed to the proposed measure. I am told that it never had much chance of being adopted, but if it had, there were those outside who were prepared to take what might have proved very rough measures to show their dissatisfaction. I am informed that the decision finally arrived at was that no official answer should be sent, but it was left understood that the reply to the Porte should be given by certain priests rather than by the official heads of the community. The latter might lose place or position with the Turks. The priests, who live with and by the people, and who are as much identified with their flocks and as little bound up with the interests of their caste as any priests in the world, will have no objection to state their grievances and their objections to the change.

The Greek Patriarch has submitted to the Porte a summary of the regulations which he considers necessary before the decree in question shall be carried into effect. For him the question is one of enormous importance. There are in Constantinople and its vicinity not less than four hundred thousand Greeks. Of these sixty thousand belong to the kingdom of Greece, are Hellenes, as they call themselves, while the remaining three hundred and forty thousand are Christian subjects of the Porte. For most purposes there is no difference between the Greek rayahs and the subjects of King George. All speak the same language, and, above all, with an insignificant exception all belong to the same church. During the last few months while Greece has been arming, the excitement among the Hellenes has been very great. This has, of course, communicated itself to their fellow Greeks here. Their newspapers here, in the mild way which just kept them out of the

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range of the Press law—some of them have been suppressed, and all the others warned, in Greece in the most open way—have spoken of the abominations committed in enslaved Greece, that is in Thessaly and Epirus, and in Crete. There is not a Greek any more than there is an Armenian who has not a rough and fairly accurate idea of what the Ghegas and Bashi-Bazouks have been doing in Europe and the Kurds in Asia. Now, the order goes forth that they are to be enrolled for the defence of the localities where they reside. Defence of course in their eyes means fighting for the Turks, and they don't like it. The patriarch and the better educated Greeks, though I believe hardly one could be found who would be willingly to fight against the traditions of their race, take what seems to me on the whole a more sensible view.

Armament of the Christians throughout European Turkey is, of course, from a Turkish point of view too absurd an idea to be entertained by anybody who knows the country. There is not a single province where the authorities would venture for a week to place arms in the hands of the Christians. Whoever suggested the idea, if he were not a Turk, had an eye to what would be thought in Europe, and probably talked about arming the Christians exactly as certain people talked about arming the slaves to fight on the side of the Confederacy. If he were a Turk he was probably thinking mainly of extracting further substitution money from the Christians. But to arm the Christians in Constantinople need not, either from a Turkish or a Christian point of view, be absurd. There is always a possibility of a fanatical mob in the capital. There are elements in this, as in all large cities, which would only too be glad to join in a row. The distress which the war has caused has been felt by all classes, but especially by the poorer Turks, and hunger and fanaticism might give the orderly part of the community a bad time. Moreover, should the Russians advance, we should have the Bashi-Bazouks, who have had a year's free play, to say nothing of the possibility of fragments of a retreating army, falling back upon, or driven into, Constantinople. In any of these cases it would be an advantage that the guard, whose

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duty it should be to keep order, should be composed of Christians and Moslems alike. If, therefore, the Greek Patriarch should give his consent to the proposal, it does not seem to me that he can fairly be blamed. I repeat, however, my impression, that all the discussion which has been aroused by the suggestion to enrol Christians is needless, because neither in the provinces, nor even in the capital, do I believe that there will be any serious attempt to enrol them. Europe will be shown that there is a united people, a further sum of money will have been obtained, and the scheme will quietly glide into oblivion. The 150,000 bayonets which the officially-inspired newspapers inform us will be added to the Turkish army will never be seen.

It may be admitted that one of the objects in admitting the Christians to military service is to conciliate them. Such a measure adopted two or three years ago might have avoided the war, and have been productive of the happiest results. Now, however, the conviction on nearly all sides is that the attempt comes too late. Among the bankers and the wealthier classes of Greeks and Armenians alike, conciliation might even now be acceptable. But, as one of the clearest-headed among them, and one, too, who would prefer the continuation of the rule of the Turk if reasonable terms of conciliation could be obtained, explained to me a day or two ago, the lower and less educated classes, who have preserved among them the traditions of their four centuries of misgovernment more clearly, and whose religious feeling is stronger than among the wealthier, cannot at this hour be thus persuaded. Too late for the purpose of using the muscles and sinews of Greek, Bulgarian, and Armenian in this way, will be any attempt made by the Sultan to grant this reform. Too late, when the enemy is thundering at the gates, because, however strange it may appear to those who have forgotten their instincts as Englishmen, the oppressed of four centuries cannot be persuaded that the invader is an enemy.

The Sultan, in his amiable manner, has invited the Greek Patriarch to eat with him, and has expressed his wish to see all degrees of his subjects happy and contented, and is doing his best to convince the Greeks that henceforward they are

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not to be forgotten in the distribution of favours. We were informed two days ago that he proposes to appoint two or three Christian servants of the Porte as governors-general of some of the principal provinces of the Empire; that he has conferred upon M. Zarifi, the leading banker, and a man who deserves great praise for what he has done on behalf of education for his fellow Greeks, the highest class of the Order of the Medjidie, and that others of his family are likewise to receive decorations. The appointment of Christian governors to the provinces is not in itself of great importance, Greeks and Armenians in Turkish employ being usually not a whit better than Turks themselves. The system in accordance with which they are appointed and hold office offers temptations to which no man ought to be subject. But the appointment is of importance as showing that at the last moment the Government either sees the necessity, or wishes to persuade the subject races and Europe that it sees the necessity, of conciliating the Christians. For present purposes, however, the Christians of the Empire entirely understand the meaning of the proposed changes, and estimate their value accordingly. Nay, even among the Turks I have heard it said that it is only a sign of weakness to put forward such proposals now, and that Europeans are not so foolish as to be deceived by baits thrown to their fellow-subjects at such a time.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 18th.*—Official intelligence from Nisch of the 17th inst. announces that on that date the Servian outposts made their appearance on the Comert heights, opposite Vetek. Turkish militia and auxiliary troops, which had come from Leskofscha, were sent to defend the fortifications, and three reconnoitring parties advanced as far as the Servian entrenchments in the village of Tchamouslu. After a slight engagement, in which the losses were insignificant, the reconnoitring force returned to its quarters. The garrison and civil authorities of Kourchoumlu evacuated that place on the approach of the Servians.

The following letter from Nicopolis shows that the old

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troubles of the Russians with their constructions for effecting the passage of the Danube had not ceased to pursue them :—

§ *December 6th.*—The bridge of 100 pontoon boats across the Danube, between Turna Maguerelle and Nicopolis, has now come to somewhat serious grief. Sixteen boats are sunk, some sixteen more are more or less wrecked, the superstructure of this part of the bridge is of course in like condition. The officer in charge of the works says it will be a fortnight or three weeks before it is repaired. The disaster came about in this wise. A strong easterly wind blowing against the stream brought up a nasty chopping sea, that yesterday dragged an anchor or two and stopped traffic for a few hours. Last night it blew hard from the same quarter, and the waves got big enough to get into sixteen boats and sink them at their moorings. The boats are placed at eight yards distance from each other; the place where the bridge ceases now to be one is at the fifty-fifth boat, exactly a quarter of a mile from the Roumanian shore. We traversed the fifty-five boats, which, with snake-like turnings, are doing their best to get loose, and on arrival at the gap were forcibly reminded of the old print of the English flagship at Trafalgar, surrounded by half-sunk boats, rafts, beams of wood, by the scene before us. Some clear spaces in the troubled waters show where the pontoons have sunk entirely. Then for about 200 yards are boats, trestles, superstructure in every conceivable state of wreck. Occasionally the light spars that carried the single telegraph wire from the front bob their heads helplessly above the water. The movement of that part of the bridge still holding together has in many places been violent enough to break the rack-lashings, force up the roadway, and move the ponderous road-bearers which have broken the iron bands that clasped them to the road transoms. The manifest result is, if it blows hard to-night the rest of the bridge will go. I searched in vain for signs of any steps being taken to mend the broken or secure the intact part of the bridge. Half a dozen Roumanian soldiers, seated on the boat next the broken part, must have been there for some object, as no one could have chosen the centre of the

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Danube, the most dangerous point on a dangerous bridge, in a cold easterly gale, for pleasure. Their mission probably was one which most Roumanian soldiers seem to fulfil admirably, viz., waiting to be told to do something. Three steam launches with steam up were on the river, and could have easily been made of use in towing away some of the wreck, especially some large pieces of the superstructure of the bridge, which, anchored by some hidden ropes, floating raft-like on the water, were gyrating wildly about, to the danger of the unsunk but disabled pontoons. On coming off the bridge an officer informed us that there was too much sea on for any repairs to be made, so the intact part of the bridge must sink or swim accordingly as it blows hard or temperately to-night. Drawn up in close array on the wrong side of the river were about 200 country carts full of bread, which the Roumanians at Plevna would in the ordinary course of things have eaten the day after to-morrow. The preparations for getting these carts across consist in fixing a small raft made of materials from the bridge on a pontoon. This will be sufficiently large to take one cart and pair of bullocks, and can probably, bar accidents, make thirty journeys in the twenty-four hours, thus taking over fifteen carts of provisions a day. I say bar accidents advisedly, as the stream of the Danube is a strong one; the length of open bank where a boat can land on the south side, between the bridge and some very high perpendicular cliffs that run into the water, is about a quarter of a mile. Will such an unwieldy contrivance always succeed in doing its half-mile with less than a quarter-mile leeway? The Russians, 1,200 strong, who up to this have garrisoned Nicopolis, have marched away to Plevna, and have been relieved by Roumanians.

Before returning to the scene of recent events north of the Balkans it will be convenient to glance again at the position of General Gourko. The following letter is by the same correspondent from whom the reader last heard news of that portion of the field of operations:—

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+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, ORKANIEH, IN THE BALKANS, *December 14th.*—A week ago the headquarters were moved from Etropol to Orkanieh, not without previous notice of a day or two, so we got over the narrow and difficult passage behind Pravca at our leisure. The road leaves the valley of the Mali Isker about three kilomètres below Etropol, and mounts rapidly the range that forms the watershed of this river and the Pravecka. As Orkanieh lies about 700 feet lower than Etropol, the descent into the valley of the Pravecka is longer than the climb on the other side; and the road comes out along the river, leaving the village of Pravca on the left, and meets the chaussée just at the entrance of the Pravca Pass, and at the foot of the mountain which was held by the Turks the day of the battle there. From here it is a ride of an hour and a half to Orkanieh, which lies very near the mountains where the chaussée enters them and climbs the Baba Konak Pass, where the two armies now lie. The Sofia Road has in this valley, as indeed for the greater part of the distance between Plevna and this point, a row of small cherry trees on each side, which are not yet large enough to be very tempting for fuel, and therefore are nearly all standing. The telegraph posts are, on the contrary, all cut down and burned.

The little village of Lazan was entirely deserted as we passed through it, and the houses bore marks of bullets and shells on either side the highway. Just beyond here two or three rifle-pits, now filled with water, showed where the Turkish outposts were, and on a range of low hills north of Orkanieh, and only about a half-mile distant, were the great square redoubts, left of the road, that looked so formidable on the day we watched them from the mountain, when the tents dotted the valley all about the town, and the ramparts were black with Turkish soldiers. Now the rains had already filled the ditches of the long breastworks that cut across the slope among the trimmed trunks of the oak trees and washed away the sharp angles of the parapets. These works were constructed with a skill and care that would put to shame the finest Russian fortifications about Plevna, and proved for the thousandth time the superiority of the Turks

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in this regard. They always fortify at once; if they did not the war would long ago have been ended. The Russians generally put it off till the next day, and then throw up an apology for a breastwork, too often, with the remark that it is good enough against the Turks. They began the war with this idea, and it is not entirely beaten out of them yet. In this remark there is a whole history of positions not held, of hardly-won ground lost, and of precious lives sacrified. The fortifications in the neighbourhood of Orkanieh were not intended as a defence of that town, but of the entrance to the pass at the back, and the strongest of the works are on the mountain slopes near the village of Vracesi, which lies at the entrance to the pass, about a mile south-west of Orkanieh. There are no works on the plain north-west of Orkanieh, and it was from this side that the Russian cavalry made dashes into the town and annoyed the enemy previous to his departure. The nearest Turkish position in this direction is at the village of Lutikova, seven miles distant, just below the summit of the range which separates the plain of Orkanieh from the valley of the Isker. It would be possible for the Turks from this point to make a dash occasionally across the line of communication if they are not driven out of that place before the army crosses the Baba Konak Pass.

As I rode into Orkanieh in the cold rain on the afternoon of the day the headquarters were changed, I was on the alert to find as good quarters as possible, for something like a comfortable shelter is now a necessity for both men and horses. In the main street of the town, opposite a great khan, stands a little isolated house of two storeys, newly built, high in the walls, and with a large courtyard. It was apparently waiting for me, and I took possession, as a matter of course. The interior, perfectly fresh and clean, with whitewashed walls, did not offer anything attractive to the eye, but in spite of broken glass it had a comfortable, spacious look about it that was a relief after the low ceilings, latticed windows, and curious mud stoves of the houses I had been occupying, in which there was much picturesqueness but little comfort. I was surveying the walls of one

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of the rooms with the view to the possible decoration of a great blank whitewashed space with bridles and equipments, when some writing in lead pencil caught my eye, and attracted my attention from its characteristic English swing, that was unmistakable even when seen from a distance. With mixed feelings I read these words:—"My dear Forbes, if you enter with headquarters, requisition this house—the best in the place. Give an eye to the surgeons you took prisoners the other day. I am returning to England. All well." Signed "A. O. Mackeller," and addressed, "Archibald Forbes, Esq., *Daily News*," with no date. It seems almost like a communication from another world, although at the time I read it both the writer and the one to whom it was addressed might have been together in London. In regard to the surgeons, those who were captured at Teliche were the ones referred to, without any doubt. They were treated with every consideration, and when I saw them in Bogot a few days after they were made prisoners they were in comfortable quarters, and were taking their meals daily at the table of the Grand Duke. They, however, seemed to be possessed with the idea that they were quite as badly off as common prisoners, because a soldier followed them about everywhere they went, an attention which, under the circumstances, was surely not superfluous. But personal liberty is so dear to some of us that a mere hint of an invasion of its rights may not be balanced by the hospitality of even grand dukes and princes.

The news of the attempted sortie from Plevna came to us about daybreak on the morning after, and three hours of suspense ended in the reception of the news of the surrender of the army of Osman Pacha. The great joy that this news brought may be imagined. It was as if every one had a weight lifted off his heart—a weight that had been lying there four long months. Officers embraced each other, soldiers cheered, and cheered and cheered again, and everybody felt free to give way to the wildest expressions of delight. General Gourko went to the positions with his staff to tell the great news to the troops in the bivouac there. He remained with Count Schouvaloff, and his aides-de-camp went up into the entrench-

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ments with the tidings. The cheers in the bivouacs had announced long before the aides-de-camp arrived an event of more than usual importance, and all the soldiers were curious to know what had happened. When they were told the news they jumped upon the parapets and waved their caps at the astonished Turks, who were close by on the opposite ridge, and gave round after round of hurrahs. The sun, which had been veiled for days, just at this time shone out brightly, and the mist dissipated, giving the opposing lines, for the first time for a week, a fair sight at each other. In the batteries the numbers were ordered to their posts, and then, while parapets were lined with men, all waving their caps and cheering frantically, volley after volley of shell was thrown into the enemy's fortification, for once a joyous and triumphant cannonade. The cheers spread like a wave from one end to the other of the line, down in the ravines, back in the woods—away on the summits went the sound until it became a faint hum in the distance, and died away and was renewed again with repeated energy for a long while. This was the beginning of the fête, and that day nothing that could be eaten and drunk to celebrate the tidings was spared. Since that the weather has been growing fine, and, as may be supposed, the rise in the barometer of every one's spirits, from the general to the last soldier, is immense.

In my last letter I spoke of the sugar famine at Etropol, and the difficulty of obtaining any of the small luxuries of life there. The famine did not last long, for the day after we came to Orkanieh a sutler arrived with an immense train of waggons laden with every kind of groceries, delicacies, and small wares, and began to unpack his goods in an empty shop opposite the General's headquarters. The news of this arrival spread quicker than even the report of the fall of Plevna, if one may judge by the crowd of officers of every rank that besieged the entrances to the shop long before the proprietor had any intention of opening the establishment. The covers were off some of the cases disclosing sugar, preserves, bottles, and stationery, and the attraction was too great to be resisted, so the crowd entered the shop with

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good-natured shouldering and hustling, and began to pile up the articles they wanted with a recklessness that would have broken the heart of a methodical shopkeeper. They dived into the great cases, bringing out, with shouts of delight, all kinds of bon-bons and candies, jams and jellies, which they laid hold of with the eagerness of children and began to eat on the spot. The sutler and his assistants could do nothing but make spasmodic attempts to regulate the distribution of the stores, which only made the confusion greater, and the happy crowd elbowed and pushed, and continued to help themselves in abundance. As each one gathered his stock of plunder, he was as impatient to pay for it as he had been to get hold of it, and although the sutler calmly took four times the price of the goods at Bucharest, the tariff was never questioned, and bright new gold pieces rattled into his canvas bag in a stream, making music that would have delighted a miser. Doubtless the glitter of the gold blinded his eyes to the scene of indescribable confusion in his shop.

It was really an interesting and ludicrous spectacle, this merry attack on the sutler's shop. Colonels and captains, staff officers and surgeons, all jostling one another like so many children at a table full of bon-bons, burying their arms deep in the cases where the sweets were, loading themselves with bottles and parcels, laughing and talking and joking all the time. Officers splashed with mud, their faces tanned and roughened with exposure, dipped into the pots of jam and broke open boxes of bon-bons with laughable earnestness, as if they had been denied sweets since their childhood, and their early taste had only grown the stronger from long abstinence. From the bivouac in the snow on the mountain, where black hard bread and sugarless tea had, perhaps, been for days their chief diet, to a shop piled full of delicacies; this was a change which must be experienced to be realised in its entire extent, and, notwithstanding the ludicrous aspect of the performance, it had a serious side which no one could fail to remark at the moment.

Accustomed always to the luxuries of life in quarters in peace time, where the duties of the service demand so little of a

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man's mind that he has to invent ways and means of breaking the monotony of his existence, and balls and parties, dinners and theatres become stale and distasteful from their constant repetition and the everlasting sameness of the diversions they present; brought up in a society where they were always received with distinguished consideration, on account of their position as officers of the Guard; rarely or never obliged to expose themselves to bad weather, or to deny themselves any of the comforts of civilized life; at home in the principal cities of Europe, and familiar with the frivolities of Paris in winter and the gay society of the fashionable bathing-places in summer—these same young men find themselves now in a half-civilized country in winter, with snow and mud ankle deep. A thin tent, or at the best a dirty, vermin-infested hut is their shelter; none of the luxuries and not all the necessaries of life are at their command; exposed to cold and wet almost constantly; no strangers to hunger, dirt, and even rags, and in continual danger of their lives from the bullets of a merciless enemy in circumstances when to be wounded at all seriously is certain death from the yataghan of the Turk, or the long and difficult transport to the hospitals—can any one wonder that they keenly feel the difference in their lives that this war has brought about, and sometimes forget the honour they may win, and the devotion they as soldiers owe to their country, and long for the return of peace for their own sakes?

The patience with which they endure the hardships of this campaign, of which the majority had not the remotest conception, is, I must confess, surprising; and they are deserving the most unqualified praise for their cheerfulness and hopefulness under most trying circumstances. Their bravery stands already recorded, so I need only add my testimony to the rest. As I saw them gorging themselves with sweet things like spoilt children, a similar train of thoughts to that written above came to my mind, and while laughing with the rest, I was reflecting a little on the difference between Orkanieh and St. Petersburg. The Russians have a sweet tooth of extraordinary dimensions if the amount of preserves and bon-bons sold by the sutler is any gauge. An exchange

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of a dozen or more napoleons for a small collection of sweets is frequently made in that little shop, and if the tobacco and tea, the candles and simple groceries, be added, the gains of the merchant will be seen to be enormous. The final arrangement made for the accommodation of the officers was to let them in one by one by the back door, which is provided with a "Judas," like the entrance to the lodge of a secret society. Through this hole the guardian within can see whether those who demand admission wear the shoulder-straps or not. If he be not thus decorated he is ordered unceremoniously away, unless he can prove by some friend within that he is one of the elect. Some amusing cases of mistaken identity have occurred when officers have come in fur coats or in undress. The soldiers only have access to the treasures within through a long low window in the street, and here they stand in a crowd all day long and reach over each other's heads and clamour for salt and sugar, tobacco and matches, and are served as rapidly as the attendance on the officers within will permit. The proprietor has now opened a restaurant in a large room over the shop, where a long bill of fare is presented, and a festival is constantly going on, celebrating the surrender of Plevna. The front of the building is ornamented with a great sign in white letters painted on black enamelled cloth, telling everybody that the sutler of the Officers of the Guard is situated there. There is no need of this advertisement.

If I have lingered rather long over this one shop in the town, it is because until the news from Plevna it was the only thing there was to talk about. The positions on the mountains were the same as they were two weeks ago; the thick fog prevented any view of the surrounding landscapes, and the deep mud limited all promenades in the chilly air to those from the house to the sutler's shop and return. Life here was growing monotonous, even if the round of broiled mutton and black bread were broken by the fresh luxuries, and as there are few houses where a fire can be lighted, the day was divided between the attempt to keep warm and the time spent at meals. As the sailor at sea gets to count his time only by the appearance of the plum duff, being more or

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less uncomfortable all the rest of the week, and without any other diversion to look forward to, so, I dare say, the greater part of the present inhabitants of Orkanieh count their days as only so many meals. This does not sound much like the story of an active campaign, but such a pause as we have had in the Balkans, after a week or two full of incidents and action, seems unusually long and monotonous, and not the less tedious because it may be broken at any moment. No one may venture to settle into anything like fixed, comfortable life, for to-morrow morning at daybreak the baggage may be piled in haste upon the pack-horses, and we may be hurrying away to another town. Now that the days are very short, the sun scarcely gets above the mountains and then rarely penetrates the mist that hangs over us. A visit to the positions occupies all the time between daybreak and dark, and one is fortunate if he does not have to spend the night in the mountains, as, indeed, I have done on several occasions lately. On the mountains the snow is several inches deep, and the cold, of course, much greater than here in the valley where it has yet been only a little below freezing point. From the summit near the pass the whole plain of Sofia looks as smooth and white as a frozen lake, and there is much more snow on that side than on this.

The "Bratouschka" is a constant subject of examination and discussion. He plays an important *rôle* in this mountain campaign, for the native is the only one who serves as a guide, since the maps are all useless in details of the surface. Bulgarians, too, bake the bread, returning, weight for weight, bread for the salt and flour that is given them. They repair the roads, help to haul the cannon up the mountains, serve as volunteers, and are caught, very many of them, as spies from the other side; generally for prudent reasons preferring to serve the army that gives no quarter. The Bulgarian of the mountains gets more sympathy from the Russians, and the soldiers and the people fraternize more here than on the plain, for reasons I have given in previous letters, but he is far from being received as worthy of the efforts of his liberators.

Between the Turks and the Russians, the Bulgarian who is

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found in the track of the armies, naturally enough, fares rather badly. It is my firm belief that he now considers the Russian quite as much his oppressor as the Turk, for as long as the Turks had possession here the peasant still had some cattle, and some of his harvest. When the Russians came they requisitioned his cattle for beef, his harvest for fodder, and now he stands with only the roof that covers his head, a few napoleons in his pocket which have been paid for his crops and his cattle, and he is helpless because he can buy nothing even with the money he has. The Cossacks, who receive nothing from the Government for their rations, and are allowed to forage, do not always stop to discuss whether anything they want is Bulgarian or Turkish, nor can they be expected to do so. The Moldavians who drive the supply waggons are as lawless as brigands, and being badly off, themselves forage when there is an opportunity, so there is an advance guard and a rear guard of foragers wherever the army goes. It is only the enormous size of the crops that has enabled the country to stand so long the drain on its resources for the nourishment of such a multitude of horses as accompany the Russian army.

The experience of the inhabitants of Orkanieh when the Turks retreated was quite dramatic. They were ordered to pack up all their effects, and leave with the troops, which they did the day before the Russians took possession of the town. That night the slow procession of heavily-laden ox-carts, with its escort of men, women, and children of all ages, from the babies in arms to the tottering old people, numbering several hundred families, made its way through the snow and mud as far as the gorge in the mountains beyond Vraceni. Here a halt was made for the night, and the people, finding that the Turks kept careless guard over them, began to stroll away into the mountains towards Pravca. The night was dark and cold, and motion in any direction was preferable to a bivouac in the ravine, where the wind from the mountain whistled down upon the shivering multitude and threatened to freeze them in their fireless camp. One by one the families strayed off, carrying such of their household goods as they could in the darkness lay their hands upon, but leaving, of course

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the greater part of their effects and all their live stock in the hands of the Turks. A few mountaineers who knew the paths led the way, and along the track made by them in the damp snow followed the rest, at first hopelessly, and then urged on by fear of pursuit until the flight became a panic. Some threw away their burdens and outer garments, mothers grown wild with the terrors of the darkness and the dreaded Turks dropped their children, and dragged themselves along half dead with exhaustion and fear. The mountain paths, difficult in the light of day, were full of pitfalls and dangerous places, and some in the darkness fell over the precipices and were killed or badly injured. But the Turks, probably occupied too much with their own safety, did not pursue even after the flight was discovered, and the fugitives suffered only from imaginary terrors. All night long the painful flight continued, and at morning the majority of the families had reached Pravca.

A more miserable band of human beings was never assembled than the multitude which, having left Orkanieh on one day with their piled-up ox-carts, dragged themselves back into the town the next day, wet, exhausted, completely stripped of everything valuable they possessed in the way of household effects and implements of trade or cultivation. The town, which when they left was half sacked, was now completely gutted, and Russian soldiers were scouring every nook and corner for plunder. Broken doors and windows, a fireless hearth, rooms emptied of furniture and strewn with the débris of shattered pottery and broken glass, welcomed them to their only home; and even this shelter was a grateful one after the exposure of the night. This is the story that has been related to me by several of those who lived through the trials of that day and night. The present condition of these people is an all-sufficient witness to the truth of their statements in the main, and although a few of the inhabitants of Orkanieh have managed to save some pieces of furniture and their kitchen utensils and bedding, there are many other families who have scarcely the clothing to keep them warm, or dishes to cook their food. They cannot starve or freeze while the Russians are here, for the soldiers who are quartered

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in the houses keep up a good fire, and are generous enough with their food, and there is plenty of corn and other rations captured from the Turks. But misery which seems endurable in summer has quite a different aspect when the snow is on the ground; and the poverty of cold is the hardest to bear.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, ORKANIEH, ON SOFIA ROAD, *December 15th.*—The positions of the two armies on the mountains have not changed for the past ten days. Both lines have been strengthened, and more guns put in place, but neither side has made any serious offensive movement. The fogs have been almost continuous until within a day or two, causing complete cessation of the cannonade, which went on constantly as long as fine weather lasted, with no apparent result, it is true, but doubtless to the discomfort of the Turks who were labouring on the earthworks. The Russian batteries are so much lower than those of the enemy that it is impossible to see the effect of shelling; while, on the other hand, the Turkish guns have a short, easy range, almost down upon the heads of the Russian gunners, and the shells frequently hit their mark. The weakest point of the Turkish line is just where it is by nature best intended for defence, namely, the summit of the mountain.

The great redoubt here was taken by three companies of the line two weeks ago, and given up again for want of support, as I have previously described. West of this redoubt, on the middle one of the three knolls on the summit is a line of breastworks, but the third knoll, after having been for some days debatable ground, was at last occupied by the Russians, who immediately planted two cannon there. As this is the natural bastion of the principal Turkish position—the commanding position in fact—it was a great mistake on their part to permit it to come into Russian hands, for here the latter have a foothold within 500 yards of the Turkish line, and in a position whence an assault is practicable. At almost every other point along the lines the opposing fortifications are separated by the valley, narrow but deep, and while the troops are within easy range of each other, they are nevertheless a

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considerable distance apart by the paths they would be obliged to take to assault each other. At Count Schouvaloff's position the entrenchments are not over 100 yards apart, and the conversation of the Turks can be easily heard. When the thick curtain of opaque mist hides the enemy, the effect of the talking and bustle in their lines, as it is magnified by the fog, is surprising. It seems as if one could almost touch them with a sword's point. The Turkish fortifications are now so much strengthened and perfected, that I am inclined to believe that the day when they could be carried by direct assault—as indeed the largest or part of the largest redoubt was taken on November 29—is now past, and that the pass can only be freed by some movement which will make the positions defending it untenable. How the problem will be solved will doubtless be decided before the end of the month. There is little question but that General Gourko must soon advance or soon retire from the positions he has gained with so much skill and energy. Bleak mountain tops are not favourable spots for bivouacs, and although the cold has not yet been very intense, we have had a sufficient degree to give a good idea of what life on the mountains will be when the winter settles down in earnest, and the snow lies three feet or more deep. Even now the mountain landscape has quite an Arctic aspect, peak on peak as white and unbroken as the summits of the highest Alps, and the plain of Sofia in the distance completely snow carpeted. The soldiers accommodate themselves to the snow and cold very well. They have plenty of fresh meat and soup, are warmly clad, and, considering the difficulties of the campaign, as well off as could be expected. There is very little sickness yet among them.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE RUSSIANS AND THEIR PRISONERS.

The Czar's arrival in Bucharest—Public Rejoicings and Illuminations—Contrast of scenes in Plevna after the Surrender—Forlorn condition of the Town—Painful scenes—Abandonment of the Wounded—Terrible sufferings—Narrative of recent events in the Town—Tardy efforts for Relief—Horrors of Removal of the Dead and Wounded—Neglect of proper Arrangements—Scenes in the Valley of the Vid—The situation on the 17th December—Forecasts of the War—Treatment of Prisoners Captured by the Russians—Another glance at Plevna—The Roumanian Soldiers—Parade of Troops before the Emperor—Labours of the Red Cross Society—Dr. Fraser's Ministration—Habits of the Turkish Officers—Conversation with Edhem Pacha—Prisoners on the way to Fratesti—An Etape or Hospice—Privations and Illtreatment of Prisoners on the March—A little Sister of Mercy—A Roumanian Barrack—A more distinguished Prisoner—Osman Pacha in Captivity—Return of Prince Charles to Bucharest.

On the morning of the 17th December, Bucharest put on its gayest colours; for on that day his Majesty the Emperor of Russia was to pass through the Roumanian capital *en route* for St. Petersburg, spending a few hours in the city on his way. Wherever the eye fell in the essentially French-looking streets of shops and public buildings, the Russian and Roumanian flags were seen entwined in token of friendship and union. Venetian masts were as frequent as the lamp-posts along the pavement, and here and there triumphal arches bespoke the enthusiasm, if not the sense of artistic beauty, which had inspired their constructors. Everybody desired to welcome the Czar on the fall of Plevna. The Emperor arrived about noon, and drove to the palace through a dense multitude, and between double lines of the National Guard. As he left at night, illuminations, amidst which devices enclosing the words Plevna and Kars were frequent, made the whole city brilliant; nor could public rejoicings have been more complete.

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Meanwhile, far other scenes were enacting in the town of Plevna, where even the horrors of the long investment were destined to be thrown into the shade by incidents still more terrible and heart-rending. Little, perhaps, would have been known of these facts, but for the energy of the correspondent then at the head-quarters of General Gourko, to whose pen the readers are already indebted for many brilliant narratives and picturesque descriptions of military operations, and of the country in which they were taking place. This correspondent was at Orkanieh when news arrived of the fall of Plevna. His chosen task was to follow General Gourko's marvellous campaign in the mountains; but the inclement weather no less than reasons of strategy had for a brief time suspended active operations in the Balkans on both sides. Besides this, there was reason to fear that his comrade, whose pen has already described in such full details the incidents of the surrender of Osman Pacha and his troops, might at the moment be elsewhere on other duty. These considerations were sufficient to induce the writer of the following letter to ride away at once in the direction of Plevna, whither in spite of the difficulties arising from the condition of the country, he arrived on the day of those public festivities and bright displays in Bucharest, already referred to. What he saw in Plevna and what reflections were suggested to a writer not unused to scenes of warfare, and the spectacle of human suffering, will be learnt from his narrative:—

+ PLEVNA, *December 17th.*—Plevna is full of horrors, and after the turmoil of the past four months the complete silence now seems strange and oppressive. As I rode into the town along the Loftcha road the other evening just after sunset, not a sound broke the dead quiet, and the only living thing I met was here and there a stray dog, which slunk away to his horrible meal among the shallow graves in front of the redoubts on the hills. The deserted breastworks that crossed the road at frequent intervals seemed quite purposeless. It was utterly

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impossible to realize that here, on the very spot, only a few days before we had scurried across the open places, and dodged behind the mounds of earth, while the rattle of the rifles went on continually, and the air was filled with the singing of the bullets that just here had swept, again and again, the lines of the assailing forces, and that many thousands had falled within a stone's throw.

From the shoulder of the hill called Aroden, where the road winds around under the embrasures of the redoubts which were stormed by General Skobeleff with such fearful loss, Plevna was seen lying low down in the valley, and only one or two twinkling lights showed that it was inhabited. All around on every side the whole landscape was quiet as the desert. No lines of blue smoke and little camp fires now marked the trenches. Not a single tent broke the bare surface of the hillsides, and only the great square redoubts and the zig-zag line of breastworks proved that this was the Plevna of a week ago. With all the vivid recollections of the various incidents of the siege, the most active imagination could not picture the thousandth part of the frightful suffering, the awful misery and wretchedness, that are found within the narrow limits of the town, nor draw the faintest outline of the sickening spectacle, the panorama of ghastly horrors, that is almost unparalleled since the terrible Plagues of past centuries. Human beings lying like sheep in the streets; houses filled with dead; hundreds stretching their hands feebly heavenward for a morsel of bread or a drop of water, and no help that could be commanded to alleviate their sufferings or save the wretched creatures from their painful death. Even in the midst of these scenes, which the pen of Dante alone could render, with all the terrible rhythm of the poem attracting every ear with its irresistible force—even after days of constant contract with human suffering in every form, with death in every aspect, I can scarcely bring myself to repeat the story of what has passed in Plevna since the surrender. I have become in a measure callous now to what I see every hour in the day, yet the horror of the first few momentary impressions is still so vividly impressed upon me that I cannot refer to it without pain.

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When the Turks made the sortie they left the sick and wounded, of whom there were thousands, entirely without attendants. There was never a regular hospital in Plevna, the sick being transported to Sofia, and the small ambulance corps was at all times insufficient to care for the wounded, even before the town was surrounded. Of course the attendants at the hospital thought only of their own safety when the sortie was made, and they joined their lot with those who tried to break through the Russian lines. The day and night of the battle passed, and the sufferers received no food or water, and their festering wounds were undressed. The following morning the Russians entered and took possession, and made the day one of rejoicing with the visit of the Czar and the Imperial staff; but this celebration of the event, however short it may have seemed to the victors, was a long season of horrible suffering for the wretched helpless captives, who stretched their skeleton hands in vain towards heaven, praying for a bit of bread or a drop of water. Neither friend nor foe was there to alleviate their sufferings, or to give the trifle needed to save them from a painful death, and they died by hundreds; and before the morning of the third day the dead crowded the living in every one of those dirty, dimly-lighted rooms which served to shelter the wounded from the cold and and wet, but confined them in a foul and fœtid atmosphere of disease and death.

It was only on the morning of the third day after these wretched, tortured creatures had been left to their fate, that the Russians found opportunity and means to begin, first, the separation of the living from the dead, and then the care of the former. The mosques, the largest houses, and many of the small dwellings had been filled with sick and wounded. Overcrowded in every case, and as I have before said, from the first without proper attention, these temporary hospitals were, at the best, most filthy and pestilential, and the air was tainted with the stench of undressed wounds, and the corpses which lay unburied in the courtyards.

The first room entered in one of these charnel-houses contained ninety odd Turks. Of these, thirty-seven were dead and many others on the point of death. Piteous groans

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came from between rigid lips, and painful cries for water, and some made feeble signs for food. One or two of the strongest raised themselves, and fixed their hideous, sunken eyes with such a beseeching stare on those who had come to free them from the company of the dead, that it would have softened the hardest heart. The small room, dimly lighted by a high window with one pane of glass, was crowded with forms of thirty or forty ragged, filthy, human beings. Many of these forms were motionless, and scarcely audible groans were heard from one or two who raised with difficulty their bony hands to their lips, to signify their need of food. There were faint whispers of "Some water!" "Some water!" piteous to hear. The dim light was concentrated on the half-naked body of an old man stretched across the entrance, whither he had dragged himself in the last hours of his agony in hope of succour, or at least of a breath of fresh air; for in the unventilated room the air was thick with putrid odours, which burst out when the door was opened, overpowering strong men, and causing them to turn sick and faint. The old man's hands were clutched in the rigour of painful death on his nude and meagre breast, and his head lay against the very crack of the door, so that it opened only by rude force. Living and dead were lying together undistinguishable along the walls behind the door and under the window.

This room is one of fifty where a similar spectacle is presented. The pavement of the mosques is covered with crouching forms, some moving at intervals, others motionless and silent. Here and there the faces of the dead come out in ghastly relief, with a fixed expression of great agony.

Nothing can be done but to drag the dead from among the living, let in the light and air, and give water and nourishment in hope of saving some of those who remain alive. Small enough was the force of men who set about this painful task, and meagre enough their means. Three open peasants' ox-carts were all that were available for the removal of the dead, and fifty soldiers to carry the bodies from the rooms to the carts, and bury them in the ditches. As fast as possible, bread and water were distributed, and the feeble wretches

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fought each other with their last breath in their greed for the nourishment. Some, propped up against the wall, slowly ate until the unmistakable pallor came over their faces, and their eyes were fixed in death. Even the effort of eating the long-needed food was too great for their waning strength. The living clutch at the remaining morsel in the dead man's hand, struggle for it with all their feeble power, and curse each other and wrangle over the spoil, perhaps to fall dead themselves before they can eat the bread.

The three open oxen-carts began the removal of the dead at once, and as I write the work still goes on. The hospitals daily supply more freight of this kind than the slow-moving teams can carry away to the ditches outside. The disinfection of the hospitals was promptly effected. As fast as possible, with the small force of men at hand, the rooms were emptied one after another. After a day or two, some of the Bulgarians were compelled to serve in place of the soldiers, and they set themselves about the hated task with a brutality terrible to witness. They drag the bodies down the stairs by the legs, the heads bumping from step to step with sickening thuds, then out into the court through the filthy mud, where they sling them into the cart with the heads or legs hanging over the side, and so continue to pile up the load with a score of half-naked corpses.

It is horrible to hear the conversation of the men who do this work. They perhaps bring out a body still warm, the heart still beating, and the flush of life on the cheek. One says, "He is still alive," and proposes to leave him without stopping to decide the question. The others cry, "Devil take him! He will die before to-morrow, any way. In with him." And so the living goes in with the dead, and is tumbled into the grave. I have seen this myself, and the man who has charge of the disinfection of the hospitals and burial of the dead, told me that he doubted not that such cases occurred several times daily. When the three carts are full they start away through the streets toward the ditches outside the town. The horrible load jolts and shakes, and now and then a body falls out into the mud, and is dragged into the cart again, and thrown down and jammed in solidly to pre-

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vent a recurrence of the accident. This heartless proceeding goes on in the public streets, crowded with the men, women, and children of the place, the soldiers, the wounded, and the sick; and after so many days of the same spectacle, no one any longer pays any attention to the transport of the dead. Over a thousand have been already carted away, and from the hospitals come about a hundred daily.

The care of the sick and wounded is now rapidly being systematized. The few Russian doctors that are detailed for the service are working very hard, and also the Turkish surgeons who remain here; but the corps is not one quarter large enough to properly attend to the patients. Some of the hospitals are light, airy, and well purified; but the mosques are still dark, foul-smelling, and crowded. The dead lie for many hours unattended, and the horrible sights and sounds defy description. In the midst of this, the few Russian Sisters of Charity move about quietly busy from daybreak till dark, bringing comfort to hundreds whose wounds they dress, and whose pains they alleviate.

I have given but a slight outline of the scenes that have passed before my eyes since I came here. A long detailed account alone could give anything like an idea of the climax and final act of the drama of Plevna. The town is full of similar pictures. Along the streets are frequently seen one or two wounded who have crawled out from the hospital, and lie dying in the mud. There is no valid excuse for this wilful disregard of human life. The cause is evident, namely, lack of system. The Russians knew that Plevna must fall, and they expected to find thousands of starving men there, and thousands of badly-attended wounded. The surrender must have been, as it probably was, a surprise, but the day before the expected event was not the time to prepare for it. There should have been detailed a month ago proper officers to prepare everything for the care of the surrendered troops. There can be no excuse for the fact that only three open ox-carts can be found to transport the dead, and only a score of Bulgarians, who run away at every opportunity, can be detailed to perform the duty of burying the dead. Out on the plain, near the bridge over the Vid, are bivouacked 15,000 or 20,000

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prisoners, fighting for bread, miserable beyond description, in the cold, with hundreds of unburied dead covering the ground near the spot where the first attempt was made to break through, and day after day passes and their condition does not change, simply because there can be nothing like prompt attention in similar cases where there is no idea of system. The story of the hospitals, of the prisoners, and of the Russian disasters, all hang on one thread.

But the horrors of Plevna are not all in the town. Some are in the Valley of the Vid. In the redoubts which the Russians stormed, hundreds on hundreds of still unburied bodies lie; the whole ridge of the wooded mountain, the valley beyond, and the hill further on, where stand the two redoubts overlooking the town, taken with terrible loss by General Skobeleff on September 30, are strewn thickly with the corpses of the Russians who fell on those days. Some of these bodies have been partly covered with four spadesfull of dirt, but most of them lie as they fell. Not all as they fell, for the dogs have torn away the limbs of many, and the birds of prey have pecked at the skulls. In the pools of water lie corpses half decayed; pale, withered hands and feet stick out of the soil on all sides, and horrible, dead, mummified faces stare at one from every little hollow in the ground, and from among every clump of bushes. Some of these bodies have been put in graves within a day or two, but still the whole region is strewn thickly with these dreadful mementoes of the fight there nearly three months ago.

Around the redoubts the ground is furrowed and dug with thousand of shells, and tons of pieces cover the earth. It is interesting to observe how few shells went into the redoubts, or struck the edge of the redoubts. The majority plunged into the ground just in front. The Turks built great traverses across the redoubts, and under these dug deep bombproof shelters, where they were as safe from harm from the shells as in Constantinople; but the whole surface of the hills is literally riddled with holes large enough to bury horses in, and all about lie great unexploded shells. Even away back in the ravines where the soldiers' huts are, bullets, fragments of clothing and equipments, cover the ground; and one

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frequently finds in the most unexpected spots long-unburied bodies, or sodden in the path one sees the limbs of human beings who fell and were left there until many feet passing trod hard the thin layer of earth over them.

Plevna is one vast charnel-house, surpassing in horror anything that can be imagined.

The following letter is in great degree of a speculative kind; but it will be found of interest as presenting the view of the situation immediately after the most important event of the war, as it presented itself to the mind of a writer thoroughly qualified to comprehend and judge the position of affairs:—

* BUCHAREST, *December 17th.*—What next? is the natural question now that Plevna has fallen.

I believe that in anticipation of the event, opinions in Russian military councils were somewhat divided. Todleben was in favour of sitting down before Rustchuk and Silistria, and reducing these Danube fortresses before undertaking further operations. This project obviously entailed the abandonment for the present of the trans-Balkan operations. Todleben is a soldier, but the new phase of the situation looks thick with considerations other than purely military ones. An alternative scheme, favoured in the Grand Duke's headquarters, is an immediate advance on Adrianople over the Shipka Pass. To energetic leaders this scheme could present now no serious obstacle. A force is available for taking Gourko's attitude of watching and withstanding the Turkish army in Orkanieh and Sofia. Gourko would then be at liberty to push through the more easterly passes into the valley about Slatitza, and then turning sharp to the left, along the southern foot of the higher Balkan chain through the Prohod gap, by Derbend, to Sopol, and on by Karlovo and Kalofer, reach the vicinity of Shipka and Kezanlik, in a position to attack Reouf Pacha's force in the rear, while Radetzki, from the heights of Shipka, attacked him in front. Reouf must run or stand to be shattered. In either case the road towards Adrianople would stand open, and the Russians would be rewarded for

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the prolonged and arduous grip they have maintained on the Shipka heights. From Plevna, *viâ* Selvi and Gabrovo, to Shipka would be but a few days' easy marching for the Grand Duke's headquarters, leading on the Guards, and a week might see concentrating about Kezanlik an army of eighty thousand men, which could now meet with no serious impediment on the road to Adrianople; while the Russian strength now across the Danube would admit of leaving sufficient troops north of the Balkans to ensure the safety of the communications in the rear.

I believe that at the army headquarters a strong predilection exists in favour of this project, but that another course has been, at least temporarily, dictated by the more diplomatic element of the Imperial headquarters. I believe the *mot d'ordre* of the Russians is for the present to remain quiescent, and let the situation simmer in the hearts and minds of the Turks. General Ignatieff, I am informed, is the leading advocate of this inaction. His advice, springing no doubt from knowledge of the Turkish character, if indeed he did not bring something more definite with him when he came to headquarters the other day, the elaborate courtesy to Osman Pacha, and the good treatment of the Turkish army of Plevna are full of significance, and as if by signal the tone of the Russians, both civil and military, is quite altered in relation to the Turks, whose atrocities are wholly forgotten in favour of their prowess.

I have spoken with many Russians of position, who do not disguise their opinion that the moment is eminently favourable for the approach to negotiations direct between Russia and Turkey, as the parties most interested, and on a basis of individual or rather common personal interests, rather than with regard to complications of what are known as European interests; but this view is purely a Russian one. In more general circles the opinion prevails that a vigorous effort will be made to settle the Eastern Question by the three Emperors, to the exclusion of England from a voice in the settlement, and with the introduction of provisions which will scarcely meet her approval, while they will fail to present a cause for active remonstrance. Many people know perfectly well that

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in August a last intimation, or rather, indeed, a warning, was given to the Russian Emperor that England could not be restrained from hostile action in the event of Russia persevering so far as to engage in a second campaign, and so prolong the disturbed condition of Eastern Europe. That notice was not indeed official, or even Ministerial, but the peculiar and delicately personal character of it gave it at least equal weight, and probably this was intended, as it certainly was felt. One result of it has been so far satisfactory that the Russians have prosecuted the war vigorously until now, instead of going into winter quarters; but, I venture to ask: Suppose events so shape themselves that the now victorious Russians, disregarding this warning, harden their hearts for a second campaign, what then? It is true that the fortunes of war change with the moon; but are changed fortunes of war to invalidate deliberately uttered words? For we may well hope, and that for more reasons than most among us know, that no second campaign will occur to complicate relations or to invalidate virtual pledges.

In the next letter we have some details of the treatment of the prisoners captured by the Russians and removed into Roumania, with some further particulars of the latter days of the investment of Plevna.

++ BUCHAREST, *November 25th.*—There was a little excitement here yesterday concerning Messrs Vachell and Douglas, the two English surgeons who were captured by the Russians, and whose arrival in Bucharest I have already reported. The Russian authorities here had received orders from head-quarters to forward these two gentlemen on to St. Petersburg at once, but Mr. Vachell, who had been suffering from dysentery for some time, was in such a precarious condition on his arrival here that a long journey might have cost him his life. The Russian military authorities, however, refused at first to listen to the entreaties of his friends, and simply stated that the orders received must be obeyed, and it was not until our consul protested in a most energetic manner

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that permission was given for them to remain a few days longer at Bucharest. They accordingly remain here as prisoners of war. I think that if the rights of the affair were known, it would be found that some mistake must have occurred in the order, because from the kind and excessively friendly treatment which these two surgeons received at the hands of the Grand Duke at Bogot, it was evidently never intended that they should be treated as prisoners of war here. I believe I am right in stating that is the opinion of the two gentlemen themselves.

In the letters below, a correspondent at Bucharest describes the condition and arrangement of the English hospitals in Bucharest and Turna Magurelle.

§ BUCHAREST, *November 26th.*—Turning out of the Strada Criovi, we pass through a gateway over which flutters a little red-cross flag, and we find ourselves in the "English Relief Fund Hospital." Up a staircase, through a room set apart for stores, and we are shown into the wards. After the dirt and turmoil of a Bucharest street, the quiet order and cleanliness is very marked. The object of the hospital is to succour the Roumanian wounded, and it was started about two months ago by Dr. and Mrs. Mower. The staff consists of Dr. Mower and Dr. Lamson; the number of beds about thirty. The hospital consists of five rooms, with eight, eight, six, four, four beds respectively. The cubic space allowed to each man is quite equal to what would be considered sufficient in a tropical climate, and here of course is even more than is required. A bath-room, with a large English bath, probably a new spectacle to all the patients, a kitchen and out-offices, the doctor's room, and operating room complete the establishment. The Roumanian Government find the house and allow sixty centimes a man daily for rations, the rest is entirely supported by English money—the house painted, carpeted, and fitted up; beds, blankets, medicine, surgical instruments, the very best medical advice and attendance—in fact, a model hospital is the result. The

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cases are principally bullet wounds, and mostly in the hand, which points rather to men firing over a parapet without taking aim, but this can scarcely be the case here, as most of the men were wounded in the second great attack on Plevna. Gangrene is very common, partially, I am told, owing to the length of time that necessarily elapses between the first dressing of the wounds on the field and when they are attended to in the hospital—in some cases so much as five and six days elapsing without the original dressing being taken off, also to the low state some of the men are in when wounded, from hard work, wet, and insufficient food. Watching the wounded men as they follow with grateful eyes every movement of Mrs. Mower and her lady assistants convinces one of the effectual way nursing is here carried out and the kindness that accompanies it. The business part of the establishment seems to be equal to its cleanliness, and I was especially struck with the thoughtfulness of the arrangement of having "brassards" to put on the wounded men's arms, so that all could tell that those thus marked would be taken care of in the English Relief Fund Hospital. The success attending the hospital is shown by the return of deaths, which at present is *nil*.

From the Strada Criovi we went to the English hospital at the Ecole Militaire, where the English hospital started by the National Aid Society, under Dr. M'Nalty, was established about six weeks ago. What I have already said about the hospital in the Strada Criovi applies to this one. The object is the same; the care, cleanliness, and medical science equally apparent. The staff consists of Dr. M'Nalty, who, everybody here is sorry to hear, is recalled to his official duties at the War Office; Drs. Connolly, Pattison, and Stephens. This staff has at the same time to look after a hospital at Turna-Magurelle, and also thirty-seven beds just given over in the Mal Maison here in Bucharest. We were fortunate in arriving just at the patients' dinner time. "A much better dinner than you can get at the front for twelve francs," remarked one of the party, and there is a good deal more of it too. Number of beds eighty-two. Cheerful patients in cheerful rooms applies to all the cases except one, that of a

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man who has taken it into his head that he would like to starve to death. I need hardly say that his wishes on this point are not much consulted by his doctor and nurses. The same kind of casualties meet one again; bullet wounds, principally on the hands, a few shell wounds. Gangrene and dysentery complete the list. One peculiar case was pointed out to us by Dr. Stephens, who kindly accompanied us round—a man struck on the left arm when in the act of firing; the bullet passed through the forearm half-way between the wrist and the elbow, and through the side of the biceps, without touching the bone, and seemingly without in any way destroying the muscular action of the arm.

The number of deaths are two; number turned out cured fifty-five. There is now room for more inmates, which I hear will be filled up by the wounded from the Rahova action. On every side, both inside the hospital and throughout Bucharest, one hears of the great services rendered by Mrs. Mansfield, the wife of the English Consul, both personally and by her influence, to this hospital, and it is willingly allowed by all that a large part of its success is due to her untiring energy.

We were shown a kind of tilt, made as a cover for the country carts in which the wounded have to be carried. It is made of strong tarred canvas, stretched on arch-shaped ribs of wood, marked with the red cross and "Société Nationale Britannique." Twenty-five of these, together with blankets and beds for the carts, at a cost of a little over 100 francs each, have been given by the National Aid Society to the regiment that the Prince the late Duke of Leuchtenberg commanded. I hear that the tilts have proved of such great use that it is contemplated having more made.

I hope to be at Turna-Magurelle in a day or so, when I shall visit the hospital there.

§ TURNA-MAGURELLE, *November 27th.*—I went round the wards of the Red Cross Hospital here yesterday. The four buildings that make up the hospital are situated about half a mile from the town, are oblong in shape, the side walls made of "wattle and daub" on stout timber frames; the roof consists of sticks of the same size, and put together

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in the same way as those used for fascines. A slight coating of straw thatch completes a most serviceable and waterproof bit of work. The hospital was started about the beginning of September, and is under the direction of Dr. Failla, who is assisted by five resident English surgeons, also by a few Roumanian surgeons. The number of the latter, however, varies very considerably, as they are ordered about from one place to another as wanted. There are ten nuns and five priests sent by the Roumanian Government, five sisters of charity, and fifteen volunteer nurses. Two of the buildings are wards, and contain at present ninety wounded; the other two contain dispensary, sleeping places, eating-rooms, operating room, &c., the whole of the staff living on the premises. The number of beds is 120.

As I enter the first ward the horrors of war are brought home to one in the person of the first patient. I see a poor fellow who was evidently at the time of being wounded lying down with his head bent well over his rifle, in the position of aiming, and was struck by a bullet on the left lower jaw. It passed through the lower part of his mouth, down the right side of his neck, and finished by breaking his collar-bone. I am afraid by the account I heard of him his chance of life is small. The ward I stand in is full of work, noiseless, certainly, and with no unnecessary movement. At the foot of one bed stand two English doctors, bending over the shattered leg of a Roumanian, who, like most of the others, had been wounded at Rahova. About the room are sisters of charity and dressers. Bandages are passed, water brought, and instruments passed in a quick, business-like way that tells time is precious. Every now and then the stillness is broken by a groan from some poor fellow writhing on his bed. A faint smell of carbolic acid is the only taint in the warm air.

The next ward is a repetition of the first. I ask Dr. Maturin, who kindly accompanied me round, "Have you no shell wounds?" "No; you see that shell wounds from their very nature don't admit of a patient being moved very far. This is a long way from the front." "Any bayonet wounds?" "I have seen about 500 men here, and only one bayonet

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wound." We went through the dispensary, dining-rooms, &c., which are all partitioned off by roughly-sawn boards, but seem to be well arranged.

The great complaint of the medical men here seems to be of the long delay that occurs between the time the men are wounded and when they arrive in the hospital. Some of the Rahova wounded were jolted about in common open wooden carts for nearly three days, entirely exposed to the wet and cold, and a good many of them starved as well. They also complain of a dressing used at the front, some preparation of iron which stops bleeding very quickly, but the after effects of which are very detrimental to recovery. I hear there have been cases of men standing so long in the water and mud of the trenches before Plevna that they have been brought out with their feet and legs in a state resembling frost bite. This tells a tale of the few reliefs the Roumanians are able to afford, as with this weather, warm for the time of year, it would take quite thirty-six hours to bring a man to such a state.

I heard yesterday from a Roumanian commissariat officer that of 100 empty waggons sent from Plevna three days ago, only thirty-six arrived all right, the rest breaking down. The length of road is under fifty miles. How the wounded are to be transported over such roads is a problem which will only be solved by killing many a poor fellow who, with anything like a chance, would have recovered.

§ Bucharest, *Christmas Day*.—The allies have had a hard task set them to dispose of their prisoners. As soon as possible the Turks were split up into lots and separated, the Russians taking 30,000, the Roumanians 10,000. These are the numbers given out, but I am sure they are above the mark. The Roumanian prisoners were marched to Verbitza, the Roumanian headquarters, on the day of capture; the Russian prisoners were left at Plevna. Many sick were among them. Two days before the fall of Plevna and on the day of capitulation, neither the Russians nor Roumanians had bread for themselves, owing to the breaking of the bridge across the Danube at Nicopolis. Consequently, on the 10th, the

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Turks got nothing to eat, and some only of them anything on the 11th. The nights were cold, the Turks thinly clad; they were encamped in the open, with no food, or next to none; the natural result followed—the weak died, and disease gripped the survivors with a firmer clutch. The Russian soldier's ration was a loaf of bread, or biscuit in lieu, and a small piece of meat. The Roumanian's was the same, and except the biscuit was better. The prisoner's ration was half a loaf of bread, increased as soon as possible to a whole loaf. Some of the prisoners died each night, of course, but as there were many wounded among them, and numbers of sick, it would be impossible to say how far the necessary rigours to which the Turks had to submit increased the number.

On the morning of the 12th I made a careful round of the town of Plevna. The mosques were full of dead and dying, the houses in the main street were filled in like manner. Corpses were lying on the pavement and in the gutters, passers-by stepping unconcernedly over them. At every door almost stood a Greek wearing the badge of the red crescent, dressed suspiciously smartly, with a healthy appearance quite unlike what one would expect a hard-worked doctor would be in a fever-stricken, long-besieged place like this. I was present when the Russians told off some of their prisoners into separate lots, and saw them encamped for the night. The arrangements seemed to be good, and there was as little confusion as one could expect.

On the morning of the 13th I visited the battle-field at day-break. A thick fog in the valley prevented one from seeing more than forty or fifty yards. I crossed the Vid by the permanent bridge, the numbers of dead horses and cattle showing the terrible execution the Russian artillery did among the carts crossing the bridge on the 10th. On the south side of the Sofia road a batch of prisoners were being moved; close to the road were four dead belonging to this party. Some were just able to crawl slowly after their comrades, two sat helplessly on the ground. A sentry, a brute who disgraces the Russian infantry of the line, tries with kicks or blows to drive the two on. One rises,

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evidently ill, only to totter a few paces and sink again on the ground. The other, supporting himself on a piece of broken plank, gets on one leg and tries, by means of his poor substitute for a crutch, to save his wounded foot. The Russian sentry drives his bayonet into the knapsack carried by the wounded Turk with such force that the wretched man reels forward five or six feet, his groans testifying to the greatness of his pain. Sick at the sight, and maddened at one's helplessness to prevent it, I turn and catch up the main body of the prisoners, as four Russian Guardsmen, great-coated, looming very giants in a fog, approach from the opposite direction. One is eating from a big piece of black bread he carries in his hand; a Turk begs some; he divides his bread, gives a half, and goes cheerfully on his way, munching the remainder. One of his comrades lags behind, and after a search that shows money is scarce, produces a coin, gives it to a prisoner, and follows his comrades. The fog lifts a little, a battery of artillery comes, jingling across the road, an ammunition waggon is upset, and for three minutes I listen and marvel at the fluency of a Russian officer. Standing up in his stirrups, red in the face, he pours forth a stream of what is evidently not too polished language. The waggon on its wheels, I leave the road and wander on to the battle-field. Another lot of prisoners have here been moved, and are now crouching on the ground, huddled together, trying to save their lightly-clad limbs from the chilling fog.

Further on are ghastly tokens of the last great struggle. At first bodies in ones and twos, some lying easily, naturally, as if just fallen asleep, others in positions that would be grotesque if they were not so unspeakably horrible. The dead become more numerous, and I know I am approaching the Russian works, against which the sortie was made. Presently, from far away across the Vid, in the direction of Opanlik, come the notes of a band playing a Roumanian march. The music is taken up from the Plevna road, there is a stir in the Russian lines, and I hurry back towards the bridge to see the 48,000 Russians and 12,000 Roumanians that are this day to parade on the battle-field before the

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Emperor. The fog has again lifted a little as I come upon three battalions of the Russian Guards. Bigger men, better dressed, or better drilled, no army in the world can produce. Dressed in their long greatcoats, every man stepping in exact time, they pass their general in quarter column, and as they pass he says about three words, which are answered by a short, sharp, fierce shout quite startling in the suddenness with which it begins and ends. At the bridge are crossing some Roumanian regulars. They are headed by the 2nd Chasseurs, a very skeleton of a regiment of about 130 men, the rest lie buried on the slopes around Gravitza, all killed on the 30th August. They differ considerably from the Russians, who move in a slow, certain, dogged way that gives one somehow a great idea of power. The Roumanian regulars are smaller men, and move with a quick, sharp, French-like action, and are well drilled. Next to the regulars come the Territorial Roumanian Army, the peasant "Dorobantz;" they move fairly well, and in standing privation and hardship have proved themselves better men than the regular army. As the parade is forming up, in company with some of the officers of General Chernat's staff, we come upon four Turks lying on the field of battle, and still alive. For four days without food, without water, exposed to the freezing cold of four nights, have these poor fellows managed to keep life in their suffering bodies. They were immediately sent off on stretchers to the Russian lines. A staff officer observed that if we, in merely crossing the plain four days after the battle, stumble on wounded, how many more may there not be whom nobody has seen.

The parade was a most imposing one, mixed as it was with the hard reality of war. At the bridge passed by the Emperor were dead men, horses, and cattle. At each side of the road down which he drove were the same, intermixed with sick and a few wounded Turks. A large body of the prisoners were close to the spot and observers of the parade. The troops were drawn up in two lines of quarter columns, at intervals of ten paces between regiments. The second line was about fifty paces in rear of the first. The Emperor on arrival embraced Generals Vetrisky and Daniloff, who com-

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manded the reserve and the position attacked by Osman; he also shook hands with Captain Grammartichesen, who commanded a Roumanian battery of artillery which rendered good service by its quickness in getting into action. The parade consisted of an inspection by the Emperor, who, accompanied by the Grand Duke and Prince Charles, and followed by a brilliant and enormous staff, passed down the front line and back by the second. His reception was most enthusiastic, every regiment cheering the moment it caught sight of the white flag with the ornamental cross that denoted the Emperor's presence, and nothing could be more impressive than the enormous volume of sound produced by the excited shouts of 60,000 men.

On the way back I could not help thinking that some of the great number of men who are employed in collecting arms, ammunition, &c., which everywhere covers the ground on the Plevna side of the Vid, might have been first used as grave-diggers and stretcher-bearers. On the night of Saturday the 15th, about 2 inches of snow, accompanied by a considerable fall of temperature, rendered the condition of the prisoners worse. On the 16th, batches of prisoners were got off on the road running to Nicopolis, and on the night of the 17th arrived there. On the 18th, steady snow began. I arrived at Alexandria and was there snowed up for four days with a batch of 4,109 prisoners and their Roumanian guard. As the conditions of the prisoners are here changed—the Roumanians are in their own country, they are able to billet all their prisoners in houses, and provisions are plentiful—I will deal with them in a separate letter. As a sample of the cold the Turks have to endure, on the night of the 23rd I started in a sleigh and at ten o'clock found my bottle of wine (vin du pays) frozen solid.

§ BUCHAREST, *December 26th.*—Winter suddenly set in on the 18th, when I arrived at Alexandria. For forty-eight hours a snowstorm raged; three feet of snow fell. The telegraph wires broke; the post ceased to run. The inhabitants, 4,000 Turks, the Roumanian guard of cavalry and infantry, were all snowed up. During the four days we were thus cut off from the

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outer world I had the good fortune to see real charity done in a business-like way by Dr. Fraser, chief of the Red Cross Society. The conditions under which the prisoners are here are very different from what they were at the front:—1st. The Roumanians are in their own country. 2nd. Supplies are plentiful. 3rd. Every prisoner has a roof to cover him. All this is in their favour. Against them are two things:—1st. The snow lies three feet deep, the frost is most severe, so hard that if it lasts another week the Danube will be frozen over. 2nd. Owing to the number of prisoners they are scattered all over the town, and supervision is impossible. Again, in favour of the prisoners are the kind hearts of the Roumanian officers and soldiers; both are ever ready to help to do anything to improve their position; again, against them is the want of organization on the part of the civil and military authorities.

The major commanding the guard complained bitterly of the want of interest taken by the Turkish officers in their men. He also related how he distributed 500 pairs of sandals to the worst off of the Turks, and next morning found they had sold them. "What can we do with such people?" he very naturally exclaims. This points to one of three things:—1st. Want of food. 2nd. Want of tobacco. 3rd. A desire to be left in this place, as, of course, it would be impossible for a man to march with bare feet in the snow.

"We gave them meat," says an officer. "Would you believe it?—they threw it away." Giving raw meat to a man without a penny, in a place where the smallest bit of firewood has to be paid for, is scarcely likely to be of much use to him.

"We gave them cheese then," said the same authority, "they eat that." What I should have liked to have asked is, "You gave them this and that, but can you or any one else say of your own certain knowledge that every single individual got his share?" What was done for the Turks by Dr. Fraser was this: clothing was given to some, tobacco and honey to all. The clothing was given by his own hands to the person for whom it was intended. The honey and tobacco were issued as follows:—By the kindness of the officer commanding, the Turkish officers, twelve in number, who command divisions,

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were assembled, also one to represent the minor officers, in number sixty-nine. To each of these was given a piece of paper on which was written in Turkish, by the Turkish adjutant, the number of men in his company, the number of packets of tobacco and cigarette papers, and the weight of honey to be handed over to him. The tobacco, cigarette papers, and weight of honey were then handed over to him by Dr. Fraser. His men were assembled, and the officer himself saw that each one got his share.

This was the only opportunity I had of judging of the interest the Turkish officer takes in his work. There was no lack of it in this case. To see the eager way in which the honey and tobacco were received by the soldiers themselves was quite pitiful; they are the two luxuries the Turk loves best. I was very glad to hear of the great heat-giving properties of the honey. On the afternoon of the 23rd, I went out with Dr. Fraser, both our pockets well filled with penny packets of tobacco; these we distributed to a party of Turks waiting outside the Mairie, Dr. Fraser also giving bread to some of the more destitute ones. We went with the major in command to the temporary hospital. A Roumanian doctor also accompanied us who came to make a report that his patients had had no food that day. We found about ninety men huddled alongside the walls of a good-sized room—a school—with insufficient straw, no water, and in the dark, all wanting food, but most too far gone to clamour for it. From the hospital to the Mairie on the way the major explained to us that the officers were quite helpless, as the Turks insisted on buying sweetmeats with the money obtained by selling bread. This, I take it, is a made up story to blind the officers to what really is going on, viz., receiving the prisoners' rations and selling them. I have seen Turks buying bread, I have seen others standing outside the shops, their half-covered feet all but hidden in the snow, eyeing the loaves as one sees a London street arab looking into a Christmas decorated eating-house. I have paid four coppers and given a man a loaf. To see the eager yet graceful way in which he clutches it convinces one that he fully thinks you have given him new life. On arrival at the Mairie a talk ensues, equally

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divided between the doctor, the mayor, and the major. A further order for bread is unhesitatingly given by the major on his own responsibility, as the mayor says the full amount has been handed over to the military. Being satisfied that the men were going to be fed, some two hours later we took them up a little tobacco. Some were glad to have it, others were unable to take notice; one was dead, surrounded by living hunger-stricken men, all were too far gone to move from the corpse, but with still enough power to go through a ghastly pantomime of raising their hands to their mouths and imitating the motion of eating.

Leaving the lantern, which Dr. Fraser had thoughtfully brought for the prisoners, we hurried off to find food. Nearly all the shops were closed; but at last a sack with about 150 thick biscuits was found, and with this we were back again as fast as possible, to find that the day's bread was then being issued at about eight p.m. to those that required food the most—the sick. We waited to see them eat; but a good number were unable to break the bread, which is baked very hard on the outside, and on trial we found it required considerable force even to pull the upper crust from the lower. In some one or two cases of the weaker men the crumb of the bread had to be soaked in water so as to enable them to eat it.

This want of bread by particular men is simply want of proper arrangements. Nobody could wish to do better than the Roumanian officer, nobody could have a readier hand to help or a better heart, but the system, or rather want of system, is bad. According to their own showing they depend on the Turkish officer. The Turkish officer sits in a café, and spends his time equally between coffee and tobacco, with occasional drinks not approved of by the Prophet. The Turkish soldier is, therefore, sometimes neglected, and now and then starved. There are here 4,000 odd prisoners. One of them knows Roumanian, and remains with the commandant of the town as interpreter, and this seems to be the only means of communication. There surely must be an inhabitant of Alexandria who can talk Turkish. Yesterday, on inquiring for the telegraph office, the gentleman I spoke

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to asked me if I could speak Roumanian or Turkish, and finding I could speak neither, referred me to a French speaking native. Here was an interpreter. I have visited the Mairie three or four times, have found the Mayor polite and anxious to help, but evidently overburdened with work, and quite unable to cope with the difficulties of his situation.

In talking about men being starved, one must bear in mind that it is a very quick operation when short rations are accompanied with want of clothes, long marches, and bitter frost. As regards clothing, Dr. Fraser telegraphed a large order to Bucharest for warm clothing, which he hopes will be ready to be issued to those who need it most by the time they arrive in Bucharest, which will probably be to-morrow. I have described the condition of a batch of prisoners who are, I am quite sure, exceptionally well off. The poor wretches who have not yet crossed the Danube must be dying simply in hundreds.

Edhem Pacha is at present a prisoner with the Roumanian General Davilar. While conversing with him the other day, he took a piece of paper which happened to be part of an old number of the *Graphic*, representing a panoramic view of Plevna, and on the back, with a few rapid strokes in pencil, he produced a fair plan of the battle of Plevna. The rapidity and correctness with which he drew the contours of the different hills showed him to be a capable military draughtsman. His quick, intelligent mode of narration, and his sharp, practical comments, convinced one at once that here was one of the men who rendered Plevna such a hard trial as it proved to the Russians. This is his account:

Shortly previous to the sortie, a Council of War was held, consisting of eight pachas and the civil powers. Osman Pacha informed them that his store of bread was coming to an end, and that very little big gun amunition was left. It was for them to decide, should they lay down their arms or make a sortie in the only practicable place, across the Vid, north of the Sofia road. The sortie was decided on. On the night of the 9th, 32,000 Turks, all the available force except a skeleton garrison for some of the redoubts, assembled in the Valley of Plevna—26,000 infantry, 6,000 artillery. At two o'clock

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this army commenced crossing the Vid by five bridges, the permanent stone one and four temporary ones. The temporary were placed one just up stream to the south of the stone bridge, the other three dividing the distance between the stone bridge and a line drawn from Opanesk fort straight to the river. As the regiments crossed the Vid they deployed into line, and they did this in so orderly a manner that the Cossack videttes, who were but 300 yards away, were not aware of their vicinity till the skirmishers of the Turks advanced to within 100 yards of them. The Cossacks then retired firing.

At this time the position of the Turkish forces was as follows: —1st, a line of skirmishers; 2nd, a line of battalions in line; 3rd, three guns in rear of right of line of infantry; three ditto centre ditto; three ditto left ditto. These guns were not used till after passing the first Russian line. The Turks depended on one gun in the small bastion below Opanesk redoubt, five on the south slope of the Opanesk redoubt, these constituting the right of the Turkish attack; eleven guns in two batteries on the high ground on the Plevna side of the permanent bridge, these constituting the left of the Turkish attack. The positions of the Turkish generals were as follows: Commencing from the rear of the army, one Pacha was on the high ground above the bridge, with the eleven guns I have mentioned; one on the right, with the six guns on the slope of Opanesk; two in the plain below superintending the crossing. On the right of the attacking line was one Pacha; in the centre, one; on the left were two and Osman Pacha. As the attacking line advanced, carts containing ammunition and necessary baggage crossed the permanent bridge, and, with them, numbers of carts belonging to the inhabitants of Plevna, and containing their wives, children, and household goods, in all to the number of 4,000, pressed forward, and crossed as fast as possible. These latter Osman Pacha was powerless to prevent crossing, for as soon as his troops were withdrawn from Plevna they insisted on following. At daybreak, a little before eight, the fighting began. The bridge was swept by the Russian artillery, killing men, women, and children, and horses and oxen.

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At nine, No. 2 bridge, counting the bridge below Opanesk as No. 1, was broken by the Roumanian battery of five guns, situated to the right of the Turkish attack. The Turks steadily advanced, and carried the first Russian lines. Again they advanced, and carried two batteries of six guns each in the second line. For two hours the fight raged between the second and third line of the Russians in favour of neither side. At this critical time the Turkish shells ran short; this enabled the Roumanians to turn their left flank, to get possession of Opanesk and the hard-fought day was decided against the Turks. Osman Pacha was wounded in the leg, the same bullet killing his horse, a present from the Sultan. 10,000 Turks had not crossed the Vid when they laid down their arms.

The next letter furnishes a sequel to the story of the treatment of the prisoners in Bulgaria, exhibiting, as it does, the captured Turks and their fellow-sufferers on their road for the north.

+ + + PUTENIEU, *January 3rd.*—We started from Fratesti, my companion and I, about ten o'clock on the morning of the new year. Our conveyance was a wooden sleigh, and we were stowed away with our furs in a sort of hencoop, minus the top bars, with our baggage in the straw to serve us for a seat. We had had a heavy frost the night before, and our road had been pretty well worn and was too much frozen to make it the most desirable for sleighing. Our vehicle would accordingly run away with the horses whenever we came to a slight incline to right or left on the road. As the roads are very much given that way in Roumania, we were always on the look out for a collision with one of the frozen heaps of carrion by the wayside, round which the dogs were feeding. Dead horses and dying oxen now became more frequent, strewing our route, and we knew we must be in the wake of some munition train. Presently we came up with an extensive line of waggons and sleighs, for the most part loaded with shot and shell, struggling on slowly with the heavy weight of their deadly burdens, so we soon passed them. The morning was bitterly cold, and before us was one vast plain of

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snow, only broken by the bleak telegraph poles and the fluttering of carrion crows. Soon these birds of prey increased in numbers, making almost black the leaden sky. Then afar off, breaking the horizon, a long dark line came slowly moving in caterpillar-fashion along the road towards us. It was a column of men marching. Not Russian soldiers or Roumanian, or ere this we should have heard some cheerful song borne over the snow. They must be the Turkish prisoners, for in front waver the bayonets of their Dorobantz guards as they plod slowly forward under the weight of their miscellaneous kit. Following are a few Turkish officers, either on ponies or on foot. Behind them come the men who once kept the flower of the Russian army at bay round Plevna. How spiritless and broken they look as they trudge wearily along the road to their captivity. Half-starved, almost dead with fatigue and the severe cold, many with fever burning in their eyes—mere stalking bones and foul rags—come the brave troops who made the fame of Osman Pacha. We get well to the windward of these poor creatures, for typhus and small-pox linger round them on the frosty air. Many are even now falling out of the ranks to lie down and die. One poor fellow has thrown himself on the snow by the roadside; he can go no further. A comrade, loth to leave him, follows and tries to persuade him to struggle once more to join the line. There is no response. He has swooned or is dead. A soldier of the rearguard now comes up and roughly pushes the living man back to the ranks. Then he kicks with his foot the bundle of rags on the ground. There is no sign. With the butt-end of his gun he turns the head over from the snow. The eyes glare at him with a fixed stare. He is dead. The soldier brutally pushes the body deeper into the snow, shoulders his rifle, and joins his guard.

Thousands of birds of prey whirl round and settle in front and rear, always following this grim procession like sharks round a doomed ship. A few yards further on lies, half-covered with snow, a nude body of another dead Turk, stripped by his companions for the little warmth of the rags he wore. A crow has just settled on his clenched hand and the dogs are

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slinking round their victim. A few paces more brings us to another miserable, lying as he died with upturned face, staring on heaven through the fast falling-snow. We must now be near a village, for there are pigs about, and we have just seen a skirmish between these swine and the dogs, to see which shall be first at this horrible carrion. It is the village of Putenieu, almost lost in the snow and ice. How different the place looked from what it was when I first passed through its streets in the early summer! The Russian advance guard had then only just gone by, and I was in search of Dragimiroff to know where the great crossing of the Danube was to take place. We were then suffering from mosquitoes, intense heat, and blinding dust. Now we were shivering in our furs with cold. Putenieu has become a place of great importance since those days. It is now one of the resting-places for sick and wounded soldiers on the road from the Danube to Fratesti, or to the hospitals at Bucharest and in Russia.

It is in Putenieu that Dr. Humphry Sandwith has erected, with funds from the England-Russian Sick and Wounded Society, an Etape or Hospice to shelter one thousand men. Hundreds of the Turkish sick passing through to Russia also find shelter and comfort within its walls from the severe cold weather. The director, M. le Baron de Benckendorff, and for the while our good host, is full of work. Not only do his own sick and wounded appeal to his sympathy, but also the miserable Turks, and they pass through in thousands daily, dead beat, and weary from their long march. "Four thousand passed through to-day," said the Baron to me the morning I arrived. Our little village is over-crowded with the sick they have left behind. This evening four thousand more are expected. A loaf of bread and pound of meat are given to each prisoner just before entering the town. Then they are billeted for the night on the inhabitants, choking up their little hovels, breeding vermin and pestilence wherever they go. It is indeed hard on the villagers of Putenieu, for there is an endless stream of prisoners. No sooner has one column left than another enters the village.

Unfortunately, through this bad arrangement on the part of

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the Russian and Roumanian authorities, the inhabitants expend their annoyance on the poor prisoners, and the Roumanian peasants are very cruel and brutal. They beat these poor wretches, illtreat the sick, and after the darkness hides their cruelty from the Russian eyes they turn them out into the cold night, which means in their plight, half starved and semi-nude, certain death, for the thermometer registers sometimes twenty degrees Reaumur below zero. The result is that the little dead-house opposite my lodgment is well tenanted the next morning with frozen corpses. Dr. Sandwith and myself visited this charnel-house. There are two rooms. In one, ten or twelve bodies were lying as they had been pitched in dead, and others must still have had some life left by their expression and the position of their bodies. In the other room four Turks had sought shelter from the bitterness of the night, and had cleared a space in the mass of dead, and with scraps of rags from the bodies and some sticks of straw had lighted a fire, and were crowded round the wretched smoulder for warmth. One poor shivering wretch, nearly naked, crawled from where he was thought to be lying dead towards the group, and feebly struggled with the rest for a place at the fire. Dr. Sandwith remonstrated with them in Turkish for their unkindness to their miserable comrade, and so the poor creature was allowed to huddle in with the cheerless circle. We asked them what we could do for them. They were very hungry, some not having eaten for three days. Major Baker and the doctor, who were with me, sought in the village for food, but nothing for love or money could be got but onions and bread. The Russians or Roumanians profess to give them bread and meat for daily rations, but there is no doubt that many in some way get none, and there are hundreds who through sickness cannot eat this rough fare. Soup is dealt out to many by order of the kindly Baron, but only the stronger who struggle for it receive it. The weaker go to the wall, and die neglected from sheer starvation, as their poor emaciated bodies will testify in the little dead-house. The weather has been more than usually severe for the last two days, and the mortuary is crowded with dead Turks piled up several feet high,

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and crowding the passage leading into the street. Every morning waggons cart them, unwashed, uncovered, to the huge pit outside the village, and there these brave and long-suffering men find a last resting-place.

January 4th.—To-day I have made the acquaintance of a little sister of mercy, the most fearless and energetic of them all. She hates the horrible Turks and the English, too, but does not mind me, and tells me what perfidious creatures my countrymen are to sympathise and assist those cruel men. Nevertheless, I have seen her go into the most foul fever dens, with the good-natured Baron by her side, and dispense cigarettes and refreshing drinks to the wretched, suffering Turks. She is an old campaigner in the work of attending the sick, though very young in years. She is always bright and cheerful, and is the life and soul of the hospice at Putenieu; wears the whitest of caps, the snowiest of aprons, and the reddest of red crosses on her breast. Even Turks cheer up when they see her, though she bears the hated symbol. To-day is even colder than usual. The telegraph wires running through the main road of the village are encased in more than an inch of frost, and the hospice glitters with frosted ice and snow in the last rays of the blood-red sun sinking over the white plains far away to the west. I have just met the little sister returning to her hut from some act of mercy in the village. I call her attention to the lovely evening. A star and the crescent moon, the only signs in the clear sky, shine brilliantly. My companion stops, pulls my arm, and points towards the right. There is the ominous black line wending up the valley. More wretched prisoners, footsore and weary, with their cadaverous faces and ice-laden beards. A halt is made at the little bridge, to dole out to each their frozen loaf of bread. A few poor fellows throw themselves down on the snow and fervently pray after their fashion. How the heavens this night with the bright symbols of their faith glittering on the frosted snow and on their misery, seem to mock these poor men!

Another Correspondent sends further details on the same subject:—

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§ BUCHAREST, *December 27th.*—This afternoon, hearing of the arrival of 4,000 and odd prisoners, I jumped into a sleigh and hurried to see them. It had been thawing for fourteen hours. The ice that lately covered the streets had become sometimes mud, snow, or dirty water, according as the thaw had had more or less effect. Every now and then I was forcibly reminded of the badness of the roads over which the prisoners have had to march by the bumping of the sleigh against the stones, or the dirty water thrown in my face by passing horses. The depressing raw cold of the thaw, the badness of the roads, and rumours that small-pox had broken out among the prisoners, helped to make one believe that the state of the Turks would be as bad as bad could be.

Descending at the gateway leading into the "Caserne d'Infanterie," a sturdy "Dorobantz" sentry stops us; no amount of entreaty or command has any effect on him. Certainly, the Minister or any one else might have given us leave to go everywhere; all he knew was that his officer had told him no one was to go in, and so no one should go in. Fortunately for us a sergeant appeared, and I was soon shaking hands with my friend, the major commanding. Often before I have said that the Roumanian, whether officer or soldier, has a good heart. To see the real genuine pleasure that lights up the face of our friend, to hear the pleasant ring of his voice as he points out the many thoughtful arrangements that have been made for the comfort of his prisoners, is a real gratification. And, mark you, there is in this no showing off of a model establishment; there has been no time spent in eye-serving arrangements; our guide is one who for five months has looked death steadily in the face, and has patiently endured the hardships of a hard campaign, and yet he has been thoughtful not as a rough soldier but as a woman. Higher form of praise I know not, or willingly he should have it.

As we enter the gateway, we have to stand aside to allow the few bullock-carts that contain the scanty baggage of the lately arrived column to pass in. In the square is the last company of the prisoners being told off to their barracks.

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As we move up the staircase to the officers' quarters in the dark, we are suddenly dazzled by a dozen or so lighted candles being borne downstairs by soldiers. "You see," says the officer, "we've only just arrived, and didn't like to leave the poor fellows in the dark." "How well you look after the officers," I say. "Oh, it isn't the officers, it's the Turkish prisoners I spoke of." We enter a candle-lighted room; a large fire is burning in the stove, too large for us who are recently from the open air. Against the walls are beds at intervals of about six feet apart, covered with clean white mattresses, stuffed with straw. These mattresses are about twice the size and twice as comfortable as those given to our soldiers at home; and on each, cigarette in mouth, sits a perfectly contented Turkish officer. And no wonder; such comfort he has not seen since he left Pera, and such cleanliness as is around him I am afraid he is unable to appreciate. "You won't find any of your friends here," says our conductor; "all the superior officers have their *parole d'honneur*, and are off to the town." We visit all the quarters of the officers, all equally perfect in arrangement, and simply luxurious to any soldier.

From these quarters we go down-stairs to the ground floor, and in among the men. There is a cheerful clatter of tongues all going together, a thing I have never before heard among the prisoners, much tobacco smoke, a little eating, but most by this time have finished dinner. I am reminded of native troops in India after a march. Mats even have been provided for the Turks to sleep on. As we step into the barrack-square out of the well-lighted room, we stumble upon a group evidently in consultation, who turn out to be Turkish officers. At the sound of our conductor's voice he is surrounded in an instant, all equally glad to see him, and evidently accustomed to regard him as their hope in matters difficult. Languages of all sorts are tried, but none are in common. Frequent pointing to a lot of ponies accompanies the Turkish observations, till at last we are led to believe that food for their horses is what they require. The major takes a Turk by the coat sleeve, goes to where his own pony is picketed, and with a few gestures the whole Turkish cavalry, numbering

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six or seven ponies, is invited to dinner with that favoured animal.

I may remark that forage is not only bad and dear, but hard to get. Across the square we go, and into the quarters of the "Dorobantz," who have conducted the prisoners from Plevna. We find them, some drawn up in the veranda not yet dismissed, others just taking their packs off. The rooms and surroundings are the same as those occupied by the Turks, except that the prisoners have mats to sleep on, their captors none. The rations of both are the same, except the ration of spirits, which the Mohammedan will not take. Tobacco is also given them. The mortality of this batch of prisoners has been marvellously small, only sixty or seventy dying in the very severe weather of the last few days. Some sick have been left in the villages *en route*, and but 150 taken into hospital on arrival here. When one knows that twenty Russians were frozen to death but a few miles from here; that five or six Roumanian peasants were dug out of the snow near Alexandria the day before these very men started from there; that on that day 200 dead Turks strewed each side of the snow-covered way above Nicopolis, over which these very men had marched a few days before; when one thinks of the miserable and destitute condition some of these very men were in at Alexandria, which condition I described to you in my last letter, one marvels at their extraordinary good fortune, and cannot but think that their labour must have been lightened, and their troubles made as little as could be, by the Roumanian officer (all honour to him) whose happiness seems to be bound up in their comfort. We were unable to obtain any information as to the truth of the rumour about small-pox being among the prisoners.

In the following we have some news from Bucharest of a more distinguished prisoner.

† BUCHAREST, *December 26th.*—On Wednesday the Nicopolis bridge was carried away by the ice. Unless the bridges at Sistova be removed immediately they will also go. The bridge carried away by the ice is of course completely destroyed, as

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the pontoons, for the most part, are broken and sunk. No floating bridge, of course, can be made to resist floating ice.

Osman Pacha has been at Fratesti for the past two days. He is expected here to-night; Prince Charles is also expected. The surgeons have had a good deal of difficulty with Osman's wound. He obstinately refused to have it dressed, it is said, for three or four days, and it was with great difficulty two Sisters of Charity finally persuaded him to submit to having it cleaned and dressed.

Osman Pacha arrived here this evening, and put up at the Hotel Broft. He was looking well, and was carried up to his rooms in an armchair. A little girl, the daughter of a Roumanian lady living in the hotel, met him upstairs, and gave him a bouquet of flowers. He lifted her up and kissed her. He is accompanied by a Russian officer, and a Russian under-officer, without arms, stands guard before his door. It is supposed he will remain here some days on account of his wound, which, although not dangerous, is painful. It is believed that Colonel Wellesley's interview with the Emperor, before the latter's departure for Russia, was in reference to Osman Pacha. The Sultan had requested Mr. Layard to transmit to Osman Pacha his sincere gratitude and deep sympathy. Colonel Wellesley conveyed this message to the Emperor, who graciously promised to transmit it to Ghazi Osman.

+ + BUCHAREST, *December 27th.*—Colonel Wellesley leaves here on Saturday for London, *viâ* Vienna. He does not return to Bulgaria.

Prince Charles of Roumania has just arrived. He was received with joyful acclamations by the populace, and decorations, flags, and illuminations are the order of the day. His Highness, accompanied by the Ministers, the members of the Chamber, and the Senate, is at present attending Divine Service in the principal church in Bucharest. He will afterwards proceed to the Chamber, where an address will be presented.

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CHAPTER VIII.

AFFAIRS IN ST. PETERSBURG.

Reception of the Emperor in the Capital.—Public Rejoicings.—Imposing Scene in the Kasan Cathedral.—Centenary of the Birth of Alexander I.—Requiem Service.—Ceremony in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.—Reception and Procession in the Winter Palace.—Opinion in Russia.—Difficulty of obtaining Data.—The Russian Political Organs.—The Censorship.—Loyalty of the People.—Anecdotes of the Recent Ceremonies and Rejoicings.—Popularity of the Czar.—The Russian Police and the People.—A Street Incident.—The Emperor and the Peasant.—Sensitiveness of the Authorities regarding the Transmission of News.—Censorship of Telegrams.—Vexatious Interference.—Russian Excitement regarding News from England.—Review of Troops in St. Petersburg.—The Russian Reserves.—Russian Army System.—Extent of the Drain on the Resources of the Empire.—The Wars with Napoleon.—Difference in the Conditions of the Present Time.—The Financial Question.—Feeling Towards England.

The following series of letters from a Correspondent in St. Petersburg, at the period of the return of the Czar after the fall of Plevna, disclose the state of feeling and the position of affairs in the Russian capital. In connection with the war they furnish a companion picture to that of the letters describing the situation in Constantinople, while they afford some important information regarding the resources of Russia in men and material.

* ST. PETERSBURG, *December 23rd.*—The Emperor, on his return to his capital yesterday morning, was received with an enthusiasm the fervid sincerity of which would have convinced the most incredulous of the ardent population of this great city. I have heard it seriously averred, not lately indeed, but in the dark days which have now passed away, that it might be rash for the Emperor to return to the capital except behind the bayonets of his soldiers. Judging by what I have

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seen and heard to-day, had the Emperor come home broken, defeated, and thwarted, he would have been as warmly harboured in the sympathetic and loyal hearts of his people as he has been now, returning under far other and more happy circumstances.

The streets of St. Petersburg lend themselves happily to popular demonstrations. Lined for the most part with noble buildings, from whose fronts to-day hung countless banners, they are so wide as to afford ample standing room for the vastest throngs, without the crowding and confusion with which we at home are but too familiar. From daybreak the snowy air was filled with the strains of martial music as the regiments of the garrison paraded in full uniform, but without arms, were being marched to take up positions for lining the streets. Talk of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, it is not in actual war where pomp and circumstance are seen, but instead a grim purposeful utilitarianism. In Bulgaria I never saw helmet or epaulette, but here helmets and epaulettes, embroidered shabracques and dancing plumes, abounded.

The garrison of St. Petersburg now consists of the reserve battalions of the Guard regiments and the line divisions which have taken the place of the Guards. One sees the quaint scarlet and yellow toupees of the Grenadiers, the curious brass-fronted, mitre-like casques of the Pauloff Guard regiment, the glittering eagle-topped helmets of the Horse Guards, and the gay plumes and lines of the Lancers. The soldiers lined the broad roadway kept for the passage of the Emperor. Behind were serried masses of civilians of both sexes, and of all classes. Balconies and windows were hung with cloths of brilliant colours, and thronged with the fairest faces of the Empire. In sadly many instances, however, the sombre crape of the dresses testified that war has its bitterness as well as its glory.

The Emperor's train reached the splendidly decorated terminus exactly at ten o'clock. Cordial greetings were exchanged between friends who had accompanied the Czar to the battlefield, and those whom duty had detained at home. The general comment was that his Majesty looked very well, but

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considerably thinner than when he left the capital. As he alighted the pupils of the Conservatoire received him with a hymn of welcome, and tendered him a laurel crown. Mr. Bogreboff, the Mayor of St. Petersburg, presented an address of congratulation in the name of the Town Council, and after a very brief delay the Emperor emerged from the terminus, and as the vast throng in the open space outside caught sight of their monarch, the cheering waxed louder and louder; the roar of artillery salvoes, with another and pleasanter significance than those which the Emperor has so recently been hearing, added to the volume of sound, which was swollen and varied yet further by the pealing of bells belonging to the almost innumerable churches of the capital.

The Emperor seated himself along with his son, the Grand Duke Sergius, in a little sledge, drawn by two horses. The way was led by General Trepoff, Minister of Police, and the little vehicle, surrounded by a brilliant and splendidly mounted staff, and followed by an escort of the splendid Horse Guards, was driven at a rapid pace along the crowded streets on the road to the Kasan Cathedral. The Czarevna, in a calèche, followed the imperial cortége, and met with a reception only second to that which welcomed the Emperor. The great semi-circular place in front of the Kasan Cathedral was fringed with crimson tiers of seats, and occupied partly by soldiers, partly by a densely packed mass of civilians.

The scene within was extremely striking. One passed the massive doors to find the semi-darkness of a gloomy morning, relieved by the radiance of multitudinous candles, from which the light flashed on the polished sparkling surface of huge pillars of Finland granite, and on the gold frames of the sacred pictures. The soft light gleamed on the chased surface of the holy door, behind which lies the high altar, and on the precious stones with which are so profusely adorned the sacred effigies which break the glistening silvern surface of the Iconostas. The gorgeousness of a worship which appeals to the soul through the senses, was visible everywhere; in the massive candelabra of solid silver; in the name of the Almighty rendered in precious stones in the centre of the screen with dazzling rays of glory encircling

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it; in the glitter of innumerable gems; and in the polished beauty of rare marbles.

Worship and war mingle strangely together in this cathedral. An inscription testifies that the silver of the Iconostas was the offering of the Don Cossacks after the campaign of 1812. Another sense than that of religion is appealed to by the trophy and banners which depend from every column, like palm leaves drooping from a central stem. Here are the visible tokens and signs of Russia's military prowess in past wars. Not yet are here the trophies won at Gorny Dubnik, Teliche, and Plevna. These are yet to come, but the war prizes of Diebitch, Wittgenstein, and Paskiewitch shot-torn, and faded, hang from the brackets fixed in the marble pillars. The triumphs of earlier warfare with the Turks are commemorated by standards taken by Suvaroff, when he led his own storming party against the ramparts of Ismail. The eagles of France, trophies of the collapse of the great invasion, are alternated with the standards tipped by the Crescent. Over the tomb of Kutosoff hang the banners his army won, when blood dyed the snow on the banks of the Beresina. Under the flagstaffs hang the massive keys of cities which have surrendered to Russian arms. That black staff there, studded with golden bees, is the marshal's baton of the ruthless Davoust.

The waiting throng in the noble cathedral is a microcosm of the Russian nation. People had spent the night sleeping on the marble floor, that they might be secure of a place for the morning. There has been no respect of persons in the admissions. The Mujik in his sheepskins stands next to the high officer, whose bosom glitters with decorations. The lady of the nobility and the woman of the people rub shoulders. The old peasant woman and the princess bend together at the shrine. A clear space is preserved along the centre of the aisle. Elsewhere the eager earnest throng is massed. Order and quiet prevail. The duty of the police functionaries in keeping clear the central passage is very light. Ladies are passing along this pathway, carrying boxes in which they are collecting contributions for the relief of the wounded, and the copecks of the peasant jingle

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against the gold imperials contributed by the noble, for all are liberal in this cause according to their means. Tall priests, in their lofty hats, their long hair falling on the collars of their gorgeous robes, move to and fro, arranging the preliminaries of the religious ceremony. The great chandeliers hanging from the roof are lighted, and now the cathedral is in a blaze of light.

As the hour for the arrival of the Emperor draws nigh, the high officers of police finally marshal the orderly throng to come up to the front. Alas, that so many of them should wear these all too significant mourning garments on such an occasion as that of to-day! There always seems to be the undertone of a sob in the loud-sounding clamour of the joyous cheering, and here and there in the corners of the great cathedral were to be noticed weeping women, poor souls who have given hostages to Russia and the Czar, in the lives of those nearest and dearest to them.

Suddenly the tinkle of a bell is heard; the great doors of the cathedral are flung wide open; there surges in a great gust of cold air, on the wings of which is borne a great throbbing volume of sound, the roar of the cheering of vast multitudes, the booming of artillery, the clashing of the pealing joy-bells. Descending from the altar-place, the clergy, headed by the Metropolitan, resplendent in gorgeous robes, and wearing a mitre which is one mass of glittering precious stones, advance in stately procession towards the door. There is a brief pause, during which the cheering outside peals louder and louder. From the front of the Iconostas a stream of melody diffuses itself over the cathedral as choristers raise the chant of thanksgiving. Now the procession is returning from the door where the Metropolitan has received the Emperor. The throng cannot be restrained. It closes in with irresistible impulse, for here comes their Czar back among them after sharing with his gallant soldiers the dangers and hardships of the campaign. His son, Grand Duke Sergius, the youngest member of the Imperial family who has made the campaign, is by his side. The throng is silent, as beseems the sacred edifice, but the eager joy of glowing faces testifies to the all-absorbing emotion.

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The Emperor passes on towards the altar, preceded by the Metropolitan. He ascends the steps, and his lips touch the the glittering image of the Holy Virgin of Kasan. There has followed him the Czarevna, whose fair face recalls the features so vividly of one honoured and beloved by every Briton. Count Adlerberg, alone of the members of the suite, has followed his Imperial master into the cathedral.

The simple ceremony is of brief duration, and in a few moments the Emperor is returning towards the door. The loyalty of the throng is no longer to be restrained. Men and women all but block the path of his Majesty, eager to kiss the hem of his garment. The procession struggles on through the dense masses, and the door is finally reached. Then we in the cathedral hear the cheering of the crowd outside break forth again as the Emperor drives away towards the Winter Palace.

A few thousand persons would make but a very small show in the huge area of the Alexander Platz, but now it was so densely thronged that circulation was wholly impossible. The clamour of the cheering rent the very sky as the Emperor drove through the crowd up to the door of the palace, and, alighting there, stood for a few moments on the terrace acknowledging the welcome of his subjects, before entering the palace to take up for the time quarters very different to those he occupied at Bjela, Gorny Studen, and Poradim. Even after his Majesty had entered, the cheering continued so long and so persistently that he had to gratify the people by showing himself again and again at the window of the palace. All day long the huzzaing crowd continued gathered in front of the palace, and late into the night the cheering of the soldiers from the barracks fell upon the ear.

From seven until nearly midnight the streets of the capital were brilliantly illuminated.

* St. Petersburg, *December 24th.*—One of the principal reasons which caused the Emperor Alexander to journey with all speed to his capital after the fall of Plevna was that he might be able to preside in person at the cere-

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monial commemorating the centenary of the birth of his illustrious ancestor, Alexander I. That monarch's name is identified with some of the most critical and most glorious episodes of Russian national history, and his memory is still green in the hearts of the Russian people.

Alexander lies buried among the dead of the Imperial family in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the fortress. Under white marble tombs sleep those whose names in life filled the world. Peter the Great, who evolved Russia from barbarism; Catherine II.; Alexander, whose reign saw a conquering hostile army in the Russian capital, and the conquering of the foe who had wrought her this despite; and Nicholas of the iron soul.

Beneath the gorgeous roof of this Imperial mausoleum cathedral there gathered this morning to listen to a requiem service all those of the nobles, courtiers, and soldiers of Russia who are not engaged in the campaign. The standards won by Russian prowess in the wars of two centuries hung from the pillars above the veterans who had been instrumental in the capture of some of them. Medals and decorations, rewards of conduct and valour, bedecked almost every breast. The St. George hung at the throat of the pale lad whose arm in a sling, told of a wound received at the crossing of the Danube in June. High over the throng towered the yet unbent form of the venerable Suvaroff, who campaigned with Diebitch in 1828.

The Emperor entered the cathedral, followed in single file by the male members of the Imperial family now in St. Petersburg, and strode up the aisle with a truly noble port. He wore a splendid Hussar dress, with fur pelisse dangling from the shoulder, and acknowledged with Imperial dignity the obeisances paid him by all. The Metropolitan conducted in person the solemn funeral service before the tomb of Alexander, the Emperor standing or kneeling in the open space in front of the Metropolitan, with his family, the Court, and his officers behind him. The strains of the solemn requiem rose from the serried tiers of the choir. White-bearded priests standing around the tombs of the dead Emperors were visible through the foliage of the

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grove of exotic shrubs in which the marble monuments were embowered.

As the pealing strains of the anthem wailed through the cathedral the Emperor took from one of his Ministers a commemorative medal struck for the occasion, and, approaching the tomb of Alexander, laid the medal upon it, among the floral wreaths and crosses which flushed the pale marble with their colours. At this moment all present knelt, with a lighted taper in every hand, and as the requiem hushed there rose the sonorous accents of the Metropolitan pronouncing the benediction. The Emperor visited in succession the tomb of each member of his race, bending and kissing the marble. He lingered a moment over the tomb of his first-born, the late Czarewitch, on which loving hands keep the flowers perpetually fresh; and, with final, stately bows to the illustrious congregation, quitted the cathedral at noon.

There was afterwards marshalled in the State apartments of the Winter Palace a magnificent gathering. Diamonds sparkled, and rich trains swept the parquetted floors. All who had been present at the funeral service in the fortress cathedral had reunited in the Palace, and the presence of noble ladies added to the brilliancy of the spectacle. At a signal the Imperial procession set forth in stately march through the noble halls and galleries, lined by splendid soldiers, on its way to the chapel of the Palace, at the entrance to which their Majesties and the Imperial Family were received by the Metropolitan and his clergy. The procession having been marshalled into the chapel, a solemn *Te Deum* was celebrated, with a prayer for the Emperor and the Imperial Family, and prayers for the welfare of all Russia. The strains of the *Te Deum* were accentuated by the thunder of a salute of 101 guns, fired from the cannon of the fortress.

* St. Petersburg, *Christmas Eve.*—I find candid Russians frankly confessing that they have no pretensions to any full understanding of their country, and their countrymen as a whole. I find Britons who have lived long in Russia under conditions which ought, as it would seem, to have afforded

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them some insight into the national character, hopelessly at variance one with another in matters which lie on the very threshold of a study of the subject. When I mention these things and state further that I have been in St. Petersburg for a period of four days, it need not be regarded as an evidence of any exceptional diffidence that I do not embark forthwith on a comprehensive analysis of the state of Russia, and the condition, characteristics, and idiosyncracies of her population. My time has chiefly been occupied in casting away as detrimental and erroneous previously conceived impressions, and there is but one thing which I can venture to aver with any assurance—namely, that the Russian people and a Russian army or campaign are two very different and opposite things.

Data do not lie about the surface in respect to opinions as they do elsewhere. Send a reasonably intelligent Russian into England to gather what its people think on any topic, or any series of topics. He begins to absorb pabulum at Dover. He buys some three or four daily newspapers at Dover; he reads their leading articles, and he finds that the country is divided into certain parties, each party or section of party having fairly defined and specific views and convictions. He buys "Dod," and finds that the Commons House of Parliament, representing the people, consists of so many so-called Conservatives and so many so-called Liberals. He gets a more or less accurate definition of Conservatism and Liberalism, and he finds that the supporters of the doctrines embodied in either designation march with tolerably whole-hearted loyalty under the respective banners. As he travels in railway carriages he hears expressions of opinion evoked by pieces of information which are communicated in the public journals. The cabman who drives him to his hotel has settled opinions on a variety of the topics of the hour, based upon the fulness of information with regard to facts which is supplied to him in the newspaper which his last fare left behind him when he quitted the cab. I do not say that the intelligent Russian arriving among us is altogether likely to gather in the course of a few days' residence an entirely comprehensive and altogether accurate acquaintance

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with British public opinion; but it cannot be denied that he will find on every hand, and at every turn, opportunities which are calculated to aid him in grasping at least some knowledge of the situation.

In Russia, so far as my brief experience goes, there are to be found no such opportunities. If there be a public opinion it finds no means of expressing itself in concrete form. There is no Parliament and consequently no "Dod." There are no newspapers in our sense of the term. Suppose the Emperor made a speech of a warlike tenor, and a Russian journal were to combat the utterances and adduce reasons and arguments why they are unsatisfactory, that newspaper would be suspended, if not obliterated. There are thus no overt means of discovering to what extent and in what sense there exists what we conventionally know as an "Opposition." Indeed, such an "Opposition" as we are familiar with—any act, for instance, analogous in its principle to the hostile criticism of a Speech from the Throne—would be simply impossible in Russia, in the sense of impossibility which the penalties for high treason enforce.

Again, I want to know, let it be assumed, what is the temper of Russia towards England. This Russian tells me bluntly that he hates England down to the ground, and wants nothing so much as to see Russia and England at war. This other Russian owns to some regard for England, and has the idea that if Russia and England were to join hands, they might view with equanimity the machinations of the rest of creation. A third Russian gives you to discern that he has a most wholesome fear of England, and that he reluctantly regards her as at the present moment mistress of the situation. But no one of the three can claim that acquaintance with expressed public opinion in England, indicating her leanings, her desires, her anxieties, that ought to constitute the proper material for his arriving at a reasonable conclusion in regard to her. What we must technically call his newspapers furnish him with no information on such topics. If he can read English and desires to take in English journals with intent to study the subject, he finds that several of the journals that are essential to his object are wholly proscribed.

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If in any paper which is permitted to enter the country anything occurs of which the censorship chooses to disapprove, he gets his paper with the passage obliterated by a splodge of black ink. His opinions then are rather prejudices than opinions proper; he is like a man who forms ideas respecting the scenery of a district through which he is passing in the dark.

Men speak their minds freely enough so far as actual speech is concerned. I found this to be the case in the army; it is at least equally so in such civilian society in the capital as I have had the opportunity of mingling in. But it is strangely noticeable that so many people confine themselves to assertion, and take no heed to the giving of reasons. Let me give an instance. A topic of discussion, which is socially prominent for the moment, is whether the enthusiasm displayed on the occasion of the Emperor's arrival the other day was genuine, deep-hearted enthusiasm, or merely an ephemeral outburst of contagious excitement. I find that a considerable number of those who are most dogmatic on either side of the question did not themselves witness the demonstration. There have been no adequate or detailed accounts of it in the St. Petersburg papers. It follows that the dogmatizers have formed their conclusions on hearsay evidence, or have evolved them out of their internal consciousness. I have asked some who take the non-genuine side the reasons for their belief. It is based, the reply is, on the fact that there never before has been such a demonstration, and that genuine enthusiasm fervidly displayed is foreign to the Russian character.

The subject is one which has real interest for Europe, although at first sight it seems local and insignificant. The Russian Emperor, it is true, is an autocrat, and may act in every regard as he pleases. But no autocrat, however theoretically omnipotent, would act wisely or safely in this age were he to go counter to the expressed will of his people—expressed in such manner as may be open to that people. It appears to me that in the arrival of the Emperor and in the manner of his reception was virtually asked, and emphatically answered, the question of confidence or want of confidence. The people of the capital do not know

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what may be the future of the Imperial policy. Had they received him coldly the right reading would have been, as it seems to me, that they disapproved of his past line of action, and were, therefore, apprehensive regarding the probable wisdom of the policy he might for the future pursue. In receiving him with glowing cordiality, with a fervid warmth compared with which the welcome the Berliners gave their Emperor on his return from the Franco-German war was chill, it seems to me that they in effect said, "In the past you have done your best for us; we know you will do the same in the future; we trust you blindfold."

But I am begging the question in assuming the fervid warmth of this reception. I venture on the assumption because I convinced myself by the most careful and dispassionate study. I have seen many displays of popular enthusiasm, but never have I witnessed a manifestation which impressed me so deeply as the scene in the Kasan Cathedral on Saturday last. It was no picked throng; the Russians have not arrived at the artificiality of selected representation on such an occasion by the issue of tickets of admission. To the extent of its accommodation the cathedral was as free to the mujik as to the tchinovnik. As the Emperor walked up to the Iconostas, the clear alley in the centre of the cathedral was maintained after a fashion; but the throng closed in behind, and the Czarevna, who followed her Imperial father-in-law, became engulfed in the human whirlpool, and got lost altogether for the moment. When the Emperor set out on his return to the door the wildest confusion of enthusiasm had full sway. The few policemen could do nothing. General Trepoff, their chief, a small-sized man, who had been ushering the Emperor, was overwhelmed and whirled away clean out of sight. His people closed in around the Czar till he had no power to move. The great struggle was but to touch him, and the chaos of policemen, officers, shrieking women, and enthusiastic mujiks swayed and heaved to and fro; the Emperor in the centre, pale, his lips trembling with emotion, just as I have seen him when his troops were cheering him on the battle-field, struggling for the possibility to stand and move forward, for he was lifted by the pressure

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clean off his feet. By dint of main strength exerted by some officers a way after a fashion was slowly made for him, or rather, it may be said, that the densely pressed struggling throng, with the helpless Emperor wedged in its heart, drifted gradually towards the door. As the fringe of the crowd brought up against the wall on either side the doors a serious catastrophe seemed imminent, for women were shrieking because of the terrible pressure, and the throng in its eagerness to struggle within touch of the Emperor had lost all restraint or regard for consequences. But ultimately his Majesty was extricated from what were literally the embraces of his enthusiastic subjects, and when he had once got outside, the tempest of the pressure abated within the building.

Again, as he reached the door of the palace, and got out of his sleigh, the throng closed in on the terraced portico with irresistible impetuosity. All self-command was lost. Men threw their caps in the air, reckless of their non-recovery, clambered on each other's backs, struggled on to the balustrades of the terrace. The carriage of the Czarevna had followed at some little distance the cortége which accompanied the sleigh in which had travelled the Emperor and his son, the Grand Duke Sergius. How her Highness, whose sparkle and brightness never deserted her in the turmoil in the cathedral, got out or was got out from that building, I cannot tell. I am certain that she never could have struggled in the wake of the Emperor to the main door by which he made his exit, and I believe she must have left by a side door, escaping the seething throng in which Czar and Metropolitan, generals and clergy, were swayed about like corks in a whirlpool. As her carriage approached the terrace, the populace utilized it as a coign of vantage. Men scrambled on the horses, the box, the roof, the wheels; progress became utterly impossible. A batch of cadets and students who lined the foot of the terrace were equal to the occasion. They opened the carriage door by dint of immense exertion; they lifted out the bright little lady, who was clearly in the intensest enjoyment of an incident which must have been unprecedented, and they passed her from hand to hand above their

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heads till she was lifted over the balustrades, and finally set down on the terrace in front of the door. Her lady in waiting, the Countess Opraxin, followed her mistress, transported in the same manner.

There are some things in their arrangements of which the Russians appear to do much better than do we, in others a degree of childishness is apparent which says but little either for their discernment or enlightenment. Perhaps there were rather too few police in the Kasan Cathedral for the maintenance of order, but after all no harm was done, and if the place had been over-policed, a scene, the fervid significance of which none who saw it can ever forget, could not have occurred. But the Russian police, in virtue of letting people alone as much as possible, and acting on the belief that men are reasonable animals, and will help in keeping order and aiding arrangements if only treated rationally, contrive to get through their work in a much more satisfactory and practical manner than our metropolitan gentlemen do, who on the occasion of any public ceremony regard it as their prime function to be as obstructive, impracticable, and unwilling to give and take as natural woodenness, with a superstructure of official bearishness, suggests to them harassing expedients.

I saw the Emperor to-day quietly taking a solitary stroll along the quay, and accepting a petition from a peasant who knelt down in his pathway. Imagine the wild fussiness of our policemen should it occur to the Queen during a visit to Buckingham Palace to make a little promenade along the Mall to Marlborough House. Active and intelligent Police-constables A 1 and Z 4,004 would be down like a hundred of bricks on the audacious plebeian who should manifest symptoms of an anxiety to approach within a dozen yards of our royalty. What chance would a Bethnal Green costermonger or a Bermondsey tanner have had of getting inside St. Paul's Cathedral on the Thanksgiving Day for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. The Emperor to-day visited the Fortress Cathedral for the centenary requiem service in memory of his grandfather, Alexander I., and all the notables of the capital were present at the ceremony.

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The route lay over the Nicholas Bridge, and along the most traffic-frequented thoroughfares of the island of Vassily Ostroff. Had the ceremony been in England the bridge and the route would have been closed for traffic for hours in advance. Here there was no closure at all. A couple of policemen outriders preceded some little distance the royal cortége, and so the way was cleared quite effectually, and without fussiness. The Emperor had barely left the cathedral when the common people, nobody deterring them, were allowed to crowd in and see the pretty bowers of greenery in which the marble tombs had been embowered. They mingled among the officers *en grand tenue* with no sense on either side of incongruity, and if a peasant had a question to ask, he had no hesitation in putting it to the general next to him, and there was just as little hesitation about the pleasantly civil reply.

But the childishness of some actions is calculated to excite no little irritation. The other day I sent a telegram to the telegraph office 230 words long. Next evening I received a note stating that this telegram "had resolved itself into forty-nine words," which was a smooth way of saying that the remainder had been cut out and not transmitted. I have not yet seen these exceptionally fortunate forty-nine words in print, so I do not precisely know what they were, but I in vain puzzled myself as to what expressions in the message should have met with the disapproval of the censor. I had referred to the arrangements for the Emperor's arrival on the following day, had stated that the report was current of his intention to pay a visit to the Army of the Caucasus, and had stated, while most Russians with whom I had spoken had expressed their anxiety for an honourable peace, they professed themselves full of desire that the war should be carried on and on, rather than that any other than an honourable and advantageous peace should be the issue. I could see no harm in all this, so I next day visited the director of the Telegraphic Service, and made a respectful but energetic remonstrance. General Luders was charmingly polite, but accepted the full responsibility of the excision. The chief offence of the telegram was the mention of the Caucasus

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journey. It might or might not be the case that the intelligence I had tried to transmit was correct, but it was not desirable that it should be made public.

Now, all St. Petersburg was talking of the design to make this journey; of course no mention had been made of it in the Russian journals; but it was discussed everywhere, from the salon to the vodki cellar. Anybody might write of it, of course, who chose. General Luders did not pretend that I could not have the information printed in England in two days by the simple expedient of posting a letter containing it to your Berlin Correspondent, with a request to telegraph it on to England. It is extremely probable, indeed, that any intelligence on the subject I might have wished to send would have been stale, by reason of its having been anticipated by telegram from Roumania. Under such circumstances, to excise the passage from my telegram seemed a line of action similar to that adopted by the ostrich, when she sticks her head in the sand and fancies herself thus made invisible.

Scarcely any of the members of the Emperor's military suite have returned with him from Bulgaria, and the *entourage*, I understand, remains virtually intact there, in anticipation of his speedy return. There appears some doubt respecting the carrying out of the project of the Caucasus journey; nor is any date definitely spoken of for his Majesty's return to Bulgaria. There seems, indeed, some uncertainty as to whether he will return at all. Peace is hardly mentioned here, except in an abstract and quite unpractical sense; but the meeting of Parliament at an earlier date than usual, and other events in England, are exciting much comment, and the belief seems all but universal that an important crisis is impending.

* ST. PETERSBURG, *December 26th.*—There are a good many readings of the proverb that "Heaven helps those who help themselves." Cromwell rendered it with all his sententious pithiness when he ordered his Ironsides at Dunbar to "Trust in God and keep their powder dry." Lord Palmerston treated to another version of it the Edinburgh

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deputation who asked him to appoint a national day of prayer for the mitigation of cholera, when he suggested the efficacy of prayer would be materially increased by strenuous exertions in cleansing their dirty Old Town. But perhaps Frederick the Great's rendering was the most epigrammatic when he said that God was indeed the God of Battles, but that He was the God of Battalions also.

In this sense, it is very certain that the Russian arms ought to prosper mightily; and in the same sense it must be obvious that, although Lord Beaconsfield once pronounced himself to be on the side of the angels, the likelihood could not be anticipated of reciprocal patronage on the part of Heaven. The Emperor Alexander left the other day a territory on which stood at least four distinct Russian armies, and he to-day reviewed in the garrison of his capital another army than which a smaller force has over and over again changed the fortunes of a momentous campaign. There stood on the Petersburg parade ground at noon to-day 20,000 soldiers of as fine physique and as martial aspect as any army in Europe can show. The Russian Guards are on the campaign, but the mere depôts which they have left behind showed on parade to-day a greater strength than that of our whole Aldershot Division. The cavalry on the ground was numerically stronger than all our cavalry on home service put together. Yet it was but a mere section of the household cavalry, and there was not on the ground a single trooper of the line cavalry. The Cuirassier division of the Guard has not gone out to the war, and the wintry sun, struggling through the gaunt branches of the trees, glinted on the brazen breasts of the serried squadrons of the massive Chevalier Garde Regiment, and on the brazen eagles which crown the helmets of the ponderous horsemen of the Garde Cheval Regiment. But aught else of Guard cavalry on the field to-day was but fragments of regiments whose service squadrons are now echeloned from the Danube to the Balkans. The artillery of the Guard three months ago defiled through the streets of Bucharest on its way to the bridge at Simnitza. Yet here to-day were several batteries of Guard Artillery—mere reserves, indeed, but with a greater number of guns

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behind the long traces than the whole artillery of the Servian army can show. The garrison of the capital is supplemented by a division of the line, the men composing which seem to be more or less picked men.

A country with a population so huge as that of Russia, and in which the power of drawing that population into the army is virtually unlimited, can feel no serious exhaustion from the necessity of replacing the casualties which have as yet occurred in her armies in the field. In the gloomiest view, she can be but little strained as yet in this respect, so far as the raw human material is concerned. In the transition state of the Russian army, it is not to be expected that it can furnish such a splendid second line force as Prussia in 1870-1 was able to do when her divisions of veteran landwehr men showed the youngsters of the line how old soldiers can fight, in the deadly combat of Maizières-les-Metz, and on the snow-clad slopes of Montretout. But all the stalwart manhood of Russia constitutes the reserve for the Russian armies. It is surprising what good cannon-fodder the greenest soldiers make, if only they are not massed in regiments by themselves, but incorporated into the ranks in which older soldiers stand. During the Crimean War we despatched, even to our cavalry regiments in the field, lads who had been civilians six weeks before they were hustled on board the transports. I believe infantry men quitted our shores before they had worn uniform for a fortnight. Yet no man can say that these Johnny Raws failed us in the hour of need. But the Russians have in no wise reached that pass as yet that they need hurry raw, untrained levies down to the regiments which are confronting the enemy. They can and do take drafts for the field regiments—not to the depletion of the reserve battalions of these regiments—but from the divisions which remain at home.

Let me give an example. The nominal infantry strength of the Government of Wilna is two divisions, the headquarters of one being at Wilna, the headquarters of the other at Bielostok. The Wilna Division was called out to form part of the army of operation, and is now in Bulgaria. The Bielostok Division stood fast within the region over which

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the Governor of Wilna presides. Probably it was attenuated by drafts taken for the service division, but the gaps were filled up by indents on the civilian reserve at disposition. Thus to-day the Bielostok Division stands at its full strength. Suppose there has been a desperate battle in Bulgaria, and that one-third of the strength of the sister division has been placed *hors de combat*. It becomes necessary to fill up the gaps in the ranks left by the losses. This is not done by making a clean sweep of the recruits in the depôt battalions of the regiments of that division. Men only who have undergone some considerable training are drawn from these, and the complement of the drafts is made up of trained soldiers taken from the regiments of the sister division—the Bielostok Division which has been at home all the time. This operation explains the observation made recently by correspondents with the army in the field, that battalions, which had received reinforcements to compensate for losses, now show a strange variety in the figures on the caps which indicate the number of the regiment to which each man belongs.

No doubt owing to the concentration of its population on agricultural pursuits, and to the sparseness of its population in proportion to its vast area, Russia must feel the strain of the losses in war, and of the resultant measures for their compensation, much sooner than would a country in which the conditions are different. But I find no evidence that she is as yet severely suffering from a tendency to depletion. After the Servian war had lasted three months, there was not a public vehicle in the streets of Belgrade, because every coachman had been drafted into the army. To-day, in St. Petersburg there is a sleigh and its istvostchik to about every fifty persons of the gross population of the capital. The extent of the drain may be roughly put into figures. The total withdrawal from civilian avocations for military purposes—that is to say, the total number now so actually withdrawn—may be set down at one million persons, and this is a high estimate. It includes soldiers in the field, both in Europe and Asia, reserves actually under arms, garrisons, military labourers under military law, &c., as well as losses up to the present date. The total male population of Russia

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is over forty millions. It may be reckoned that one male in four is physically capable of bearing arms. The withdrawal for war purposes from the sections of population available is therefore about one man in every ten, a proportion which can scarcely be reckoned to border upon depletion.

It may safely be held then that Russia could afford, so far as the raw material of fighting men goes, to continue a bloody war for some time to come without finding herself suffering from exhaustion. Why, between December, 1806, and February, 1807, the Russian losses in battle, out of a population not one-tenth so large as the present population of Russia, were within a few thousands of the losses she has suffered as well in Asia as in Europe from the beginning of the war to the surrender of Plevna. In one battle, on the fell day of Borodino, Russia gave to the demon of war one-half as heavy a tribute as she has paid since she drew the sword in April up to the present hour. But war is not made by dint alone of stout and plentiful soldiers. In the old days they reckoned for more than they can be reckoned now, and it mattered less to Kutosoff, as he gazed on the *melée* in which his stubborn serfs struggled hand to hand with the grenadires of Ney and the keen-sworded cuirassiers of Caulaincourt, that his army was exceptionally under-officered, than it did to Schahoffskoy as from the heights of Radisovo he watched his under-officered battalions of gallant inexpert lads meeting death with hopeless indomitable valour for want of leaders to show them what to do. The conditions of war have changed since the fate of battle waved to and fro on the snow on which fell the shadow of the fir-trees of Eylau. A larger proportion of officers to men are now needed than ever were before required; and this is true, even in the face of the fact that six months' fighting and campaigning have changed the raw levies of midsummer into the veterans of winter.

A soldier, in the nature of things, is more easily made than an officer, but the officer now takes longer time to make than ever he did before. The weakness of the Russian armies is not now, and will not be for a long time, however strenuously the war endures, in men; but its weakness in officers, always a serious drag on its efficiency, is more noticeable than ever

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before, and the evil must grow in aggravation in proportion to the prolongation of active warfare. There were too few officers at first, and throughout the fighting they have died with gallant, reckless freedom. There are plenty of men forthcoming for the Bielostok Division, which I cited above; but the officers of it are sparse in the extreme.

On parade to-day there was not a squadron or a company that was not under-officered. There is an actual momentous and dangerous depletion of the officerhood of the Russian army. The seriousness of the evil has been apparent in combating with the Turks, whose strong point certainly does not lie in officers. In taking into account the contingency of hostile relations with any Power whose soldiers might have enjoyed training in the tactics of modern warfare, and whose officers might be skilled in their application, it could not well be but that the scantiness of officers in the armies of Russia should occasion solicitude. Nor could such solicitude find mitigating circumstances in the existence of a large body of trained and seasoned non-commissioned officers to be relied on in emergencies. It is not easy to discern in what material respect the Russian non-commissioned officers differ from the Russian private. He has, of course, all the virtues of the latter, and they are neither few nor unimportant; he shares the characteristics in an equal degree, of which, if he were quit, the Russian linesman would be the perfection of a soldier. You cannot make an efficient non-commissioned officer by having recourse to the simple expedient of stitching stripes on his arm or a slip of gold braiding round his collar.

The financial condition and prospects of Russia may be such as to occasion more solicitude to her authorities in relation to the expediency of prolonged warfare than is to be caused by any purely military consideration; but this is a subject of which I cannot treat because of my ignorance of it. I do not know that the problem has ever been practically worked out, whether it be a worse predicament for a State engaged in warfare to have plenty of money but no men, or plenty of men and no money. The Turks have gone a long way to prove that it is possible to make a good fight where the men exist, although the money-bags are to all appearance empty; but

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the fighting possibilities of the converse phase remain undefined. To the superficial observer, it may be observed, Russia shows no symptoms of impecuniosity, at all events in her capital. All classes seem to thrive in contentment, and there are no beggars. But perhaps General Trepoff forbids street begging, and if so I am not surprised at the non-appearance of it, for the Colonel Henderson of St. Petersburg is not the kind of man to be trifled with.

The ill-feeling against England is intensifying, owing probably to the disquietude which is obviously being caused by doubt as to the course which England may take. There is to a Briton a certain sense of satisfaction in the discernment of this disquietude. No doubt all Britons would prefer that their country were the object of universal and ardent love; but in default of this, the feeling is natural, even if it be a human weakness, that it is infinitely pleasanter to our national self-love to be disliked than to be despised or ignored. "Praise me or pitch into me," I once heard an artist say to a critic; "I don't much mind which way it is, but don't, please, omit to notice me." Of the official world of St. Petersburg I have little conversance, but the following may be accepted as one of the most recent utterances emanating from the Foreign Office in regard to England, "If it wants war it will have to declare it; if it wants peace, it will have to wait for it."

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CHAPTER IX.

CONSTANTINOPLE, THE DANUBE, AND THE BLACK SEA.

Effects of the Fall of Plevna on Opinion in Turkey.—Turkish Views of the Situation.—Expectation of English Intervention.—Increased Desire for Peace.—Exhaustion of Turkish Resources.—Unpopularity of the Proposal to enrol Christians.—Assembling of the Turkish Parliament.—Failure of the New Constitution.—Proceedings of the New Legislature.—Rumoured Recall of Midhat Pacha.—Arrest of Jewish Bankers.—Depreciation of the Turkish Currency.—The Blockade of the Russian Black Sea Ports.—Irregularities in its Enforcement.—Alleged Illegal Arrest of Foreign Vessels.—Rustchuk and Giurgevo.—Condition of the Village of Slobosia.—The Russian Batteries.—Excellence of Turkish Earthworks.—Bombardment of Rustchuk.—Turkish Outposts Frozen.—The Danube Pontoon Bridges.—The Question of Transport and Supplies.—A Thaw.—Affairs in the Crimea.—Naval Operations in the Black Sea.—Capture of a Turkish Troopship.—A Cruise in the Euxine.—Odessa.—Carelessness of the Blockading Force.

Before proceeding with the narrative of the various passages of the Balkans and the invasion of Roumelia by the Russians, it will be convenient to take a glance at the state of affairs in Constantinople, and on the Danube, and to introduce some letters descriptive of the later naval operations in the Black Sea.

Constantinople, *December 26th.*—The fall of Plevna for the moment had a remarkable effect upon the Turkish population. The news leaked out from the embassies, and although it has not even yet been officially published by the Government, the Turkish newspapers soon gave the fact publicity. The majority among the Turks had I believe come to the conclusion that the situation was almost desperate, that they could not compete with Russia without help, and that no help was likely to be afforded them. Hence the blow at Plevna stunned them. They believed it to be the beginning of the end.

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The wisest, too, among the Turks have, I believe, come to see that the longer the war lasts the worse are the terms which Russia is likely to exact. The programme of the Conference, whittled down by the friends of the Turkish Government until it might be made acceptable to Turkey, and until, indeed, the proposals contained in it seemed hardly worth accepting or rejecting, was nevertheless rejected. A Turk who wishes for peace may well doubt, or, indeed, may have no doubt that a mistake was made in rejecting them. The terms which are offered now are hard, assuming that those contained in the newspapers as emanating from Russia are what she demands. The loss of Bulgaria, of Bosnia, and Herzegovina, of a portion of Armenia, is the infliction of a terrible penalty upon Turkey, and one which the Turks are naturally unwilling to pay if any way can be found of avoiding it. But the question was, and to some extent is, can the penalties be increased in case of further defeat?

And then there comes the possibility of the loss of Thessaly, of Epirus, of Crete, and even of Constantinople itself. In the interest of their country the more thoughtful among the Turks might well ask that something should be done to bring about a settlement at once. Such is the view that I know to have been taken by some men of this class. Even in the Turkish newspapers writers have said as much. I telegraphed the statement of one of them, that it was not to be supposed that a nation of 15,000,000 could compete with one of 75,000,000.

There was just one chance left, that some other Power should come to their assistance. The country to which they have always looked has of course been England. But since the declaration of Lord Derby, given in reply to the deputation headed by Lord Stratheden and Campbell, the hope that England would intervene had greatly lessened—had, in fact, almost disappeared. The deputation and the reply were the wettest blanket which has yet been applied to Turkish hopes of assistance from England. The leader of the deputation is comparatively well known out here, and is known not to be likely to have an overwhelming influence on English or other politics. The Turks sought to obtain information about his

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following, but every Englishman was bound to admit that he knew nothing about them. The words, however, of Lord Derby were published in most, probably in all, the local newspapers, and the last shred of hope of interference vanished. The one hope which the Turks had left was in their own arms and their own valour. The disaster at Plevna showed them that this had failed; while, in a kind of blind despair, they spoke of fighting to the last cartridge, they yet spoke of mediation, and trusted to the friendly offices of the Powers to obtain terms for them.

I have hitherto spoken in the past tense, and have done so intentionally, because what I have attempted to describe was, rather than is, the feeling among the Turks. Now, again, there has sprang up among them the hope of English interference. It is whispered about that the Turks have been told to hold out at any cost, to refuse any terms which Russia may offer, above all to refuse to make the concession which shall allow the ships of war belonging to Russia or to any other Power to pass the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles; for that then England will assuredly come to their help. I know nothing of the origin of this rumour, though it is confidently stated to have arisen from representations made by Mr. Layard.

I know enough of the place also to recognize that, the wish being father to the thought, it is quite possible that the statement is a pure invention so far as Mr. Layard's name is connected with it. But the statement and the belief in its truth is widespread, and is in every way simply and purely mischievous unless it is true. If it be true, the English people will probably know the fact some days before this letter can reach England, and I, of course, have nothing more to say on it. But if it be not true, it is desirable that the Turks should be rid of the illusion. In fairness and justice to the Turks themselves, these false hopes should be destroyed.

I have at various times had to point out how the action of the English Government had misled the Turks; how the refusal to accept the Berlin Memorandum, the sending of the Fleet to Besika Bay and its continuance there, the speeches of Lord Beaconsfield, and the refusal to maintain the European

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concert on the rejection of the terms at the Conference, have naturally led the Turks to believe that we should help them. The Turks maintain—and not altogether without reason—that they have just cause of complaint against the English Government for having deluded them with false hopes. We are, therefore, bound as a nation not to allow them any longer to be deluded unless we intend to help them. They have arrived now at a crisis in the war, and if England sees no reason to change her policy of neutrality, the wisest advice to give the Turks is, those who are urging them to continue the war are luring them on to their destruction. At any rate they have the right to know, once for all, that they need not expect any help from England, and that, all rumours and statements notwithstanding from people professing to have information, we mean to be neutral.

The desire for peace among all classes has now become very strong. The feeling among the Turks is that they have shown Europe that they can still fight well, but that they cannot be expected to do more unless they have foreign aid. The terms which they may obtain now need not include the loss of Thessaly and Epirus, while, if the war continues, these provinces will probably be lost also. Their resources in men and money have been poured out lavishly, but the cost in both has been immense. The drain in money will take them years to recover. The drain in men can never be recovered. Moreover, the Turks at least do not lose sight of the question, that the struggle is not one between Russia and Turkey only, but primarily one between the Moslem and the Christian inhabitants of the Empire. The natural course of events was bringing about every year a marked diminution of the numbers of the first as compared with those of the second. Every soldier who falls on the Turkish side increases the disproportion. Poverty is increasing everywhere, and the events of the last two months have made resistance next to hopeless. Unless, therefore, there should be a promise of external aid, I do not believe that the Government will determine to continue a war which, the longer it lasts, will exact from the vanquished the worse terms.

The silly proposal to employ Christians, or rather to make

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Europe believe that because a few might be enrolled in Constantinople, any considerable force would be brought into the field against Russia, still continues to occupy attention. As I explained in a telegram, the Greeks are divided upon the question. Upon the assurance that the proposal was to arm the Greek Christians solely for the purpose of preserving order in the districts in which they should been rolled, the Greek Patriarch accepted it.

On Sunday last the Encyclical of the Patriarch was appointed to be read in all the Greek churches of the capital. In Pera, where the congregations are wealthy, the reading passed off without any disturbance. In Stamboul, on the contrary, there was hardly a church where the reading did not call forth signs of disapproval. In three the document was torn out of the hands of the priest; in others there were cries in opposition. I venture to predict that if the war should shortly come to an end the proposal will be altogether dropped, unless the European Powers urge that it should be accepted; and in time of peace I think it probable that neither the Greeks nor Armenians would object to a proposal to arm them in proportion to their numbers and to give them Christian officers, but would rather be delighted at the chance. If the war should go on there will probably be a decree allowing substitutes, and the wealthy Christians will be made to contribute money to the Government. The employment of Christians in the army was one of the most important and valuable reforms promised in the Hatti Humayoun. In the decree promulgated by Abdul Aziz two years ago the concession was again granted, and there was yet time to have carried it into effect. Not a step, however, was ever taken to give effect to the promise, and of course the Christians object to being called upon to serve when Turkish recruits have failed, when they have no officers, and therefore no security that they will not be mixed in small numbers with Moslems, and when the reform is only to be carried out when the enemy of the Turks is threatening the gates.

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *January 4th.*—Once more the Chamber of Deputies has been called together. At the conclusion of its first

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session I mentioned that it had shown evidence that it might become an important element in the State. Many of the members had spoken out boldly against the abuses which existed in the places they represented. Moslem and Christian alike complained of the bad government which afflicted all classes of the community, and of the centralization which sacrificed the provinces to support the oligarchy of Pachas in Constantinople. It was found that without entering upon the special grievances of the Christians there was an abundant crop which injured alike Mohammedans and Christians.

Towards the end of the session the Christian members, emboldened by the courage with which the Moslems spoke, complained of the injustice with which they were treated, and one member in particular dared to state what the Kurds had been doing to the Christians in Armenia. The great defect of the new Parliament was, however, that it was absolutely powerless. The Pachas were perfectly willing to let the members say what they liked, on condition that the members would allow the Pachas to do what they liked. For the purpose of finding out what a number of men belonging to various parts of the Empire thought about the Government, the Chamber was of use. For the practical purposes of legislation it was useless. Many resolutions were adopted, but, as Midhat Pacha has pointed out, nothing whatever has been done to give them the force of law.

In one respect, indeed, and in this respect only, the Turkish Parliament has been and is an unmitigated nuisance. Whenever a Minister during the last few months has wished to get rid of responsibility, his plea has always been that now there is a Chamber everything must be brought before it. In administration the Government of Turkey has often been described as a weak despotism, and this reputation has been gained to a considerable extent by the extreme difficulty in finding a responsible person. One department shifts the burden of responsibility upon another. The other refers it to somebody else, and suitors of every kind find difficulty in getting hold of anybody who will take the trouble to hold himself responsible. There are no permanent heads of

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departments, and the whims of the Palace have so often changed the various Ministers, and rendered the future of office so uncertain, that each Minister is unwilling either to put himself out of the way to do anything or to accept responsibility.

The result is that for years past one of the standing complaints against the Government has been that it is difficult to get anything done. There is probably not an Ambassador here whose work would not be lessened by three-fourths if the departments of the Government could be made to accept responsibility as similar departments do in Western Europe. The matter, however, has become worse since the establishment of the Constitution. When a Turkish Minister is now pressed by an Ambassador, his answer is that the matter must be referred to the Chamber, or that the Constitution forbids him to decide without sending it before the Council of State. While, therefore, on the one hand, the Chamber is not allowed to advance any matter by legislation, it is made a plea for delay on the other.

The Parliament will probably assist the Ministers by ridding them of the responsibility of accepting terms of peace. There are, of course, a number of Pachas who are out, who will be ready to make as much capital as possible out of the acceptance of the terms which may be obtained from Russia. Those who are in know this, and will equally, of course, be glad to have the burden of responsibility put upon the shoulders of the Chamber.

The first business of the new Parliament was to elect its President. Last session Achmet Vevik Pacha was the President. Subsequently he was made Governor of Adrianople, but a few weeks ago was dismissed. It is generally believed that the Goverment is very desirous to keep him out of the Chamber. He was himself unwilling to be re-elected as President, and addressed a letter to the *Stamboul* in which he stated that he did not wish to hold that position. He did, however, wish to be a deputy, and whatever his faults may be there is no doubt that he would make a very useful deputy. He is probably the most learned Turk living; and though his ability is not nearly so great as he himself esti-

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mates it, yet he could often give useful advice and add light to questions under discussion. He was nominated in several places, but nowhere elected, and his non-election is attributed to the opposition, if not to the direct orders or manipulation, of the Government. The Chamber selected three nominees for the President's chair, and out of these the Sultan chose Hassan Fechmi Effendi. Hassan has hitherto acted as a Turkish advocate. At one time he was a judge in the courts for the trial of commercial cases, but resigned his position, probably because he could not afford to retain it. He is an able and, I believe, altogether honest man, one who belongs to the very salt of his race, and who showed by his conduct last session that he is among the few who are willing to make the concessions which justice requires for granting equality to the Christian races, and to urge on the reforms which are needed to lift the country out of the depths of its commercial stagnation.

The Chamber has been occupied up to yesterday in discussing the answer to the Speech by the Sultan. To judge by the three days' debates which have taken place, the present House is not likely to be less tractable than the last. The five bureaux or committees of the House were not at all disposed to make the answer a mere echo of the Speech. On Tuesday the House divided on the question of the wording of a passage expressing disapprobation of the conduct of political and military affairs by the Cabinet. Sadyk Pacha produced the draft of a new answer which was taken to come from the Ministers, but this was rejected, and forty-one members voted for, and forty against, the obnoxious phrase censuring the Cabinet. Again, an attempt was made to get the obnoxious phrase altered, but the attempt was met by another modification on the part of the Opposition which, instead of the Cabinet, condemned "those who hold the Executive Power." The passage thus made more comprehensive, and expressing the opinion that the military and political situation of the country would have been different if it had been more wisely dealt with by those who hold the Executive Power, was then carried by a majority of twenty-four votes, the numbers being fifty-six against thirty-two.

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It is said that this majority was obtained in consequence of a rumour which was widely spread for a day or two that Midhat would be recalled. There can be no doubt that this ex-Grand Vizier has still a considerable number of followers in Constantinople, and that the belief is held by not a few that he will be recalled. I do not give this as my own opinion, because, remembering the circumstances under which he was banished, I am inclined to doubt whether his return would not be regarded as dangerous to too many of those now in power, but the existence of the desire to see him recalled by a good many of the Young Turkey party is a fact to be taken note of.

At the sitting held yesterday, when the Address was again taken into consideration, there was, if anything, a heightening of the tone of the Opposition, notwithstanding all the means which had been brought into play in the interval to provoke a reaction in favour of the Ministry. In reply to the stereotyped argument equivalent to Mr. Lincoln's phrase of swopping horses while crossing a stream, several deputies, and especially the representative of Beyrout—the late secretary of several Grand Viziers—whom I have already mentioned, rejoined that that was a worn-out excuse, as the country had always been in difficulties, and that consequently there had always been a pretext for putting off reforms, and probably always would be. One of the sorest points raised during the discussion which was somewhat wild, tending, as the President judiciously remarked, to wander into a discussion of measures to be taken rather than of the terms of the Address in reply, was in consequence of an observation with regard to a demand for a certain sum in caimé or paper money, and a suggestion as to the advisability of verifying the employment of the 15,000,000 of caimés already issued. The Minister of Finance will have to appear before the Chamber to answer this question. He is not the only member of the Government who is already subject to an interpellation, the Minister of Marine at the present moment, Said Pacha, ferik of the palace, being obliged to give explanations as to how it happened that the *Mersina*, with the much vaunted blockade and ironclad fleet of the Black Sea,

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fell so quietly into the hands of the Russians with over 700 troops on board.

Six of the seven Jewish bankers, who were arrested on the ground of speculating in caimés, and who were released through the influence of Mr. Zarifi, were sent for, and after being subjected to an interrogation, were sentenced, without appearing before any tribunal, or even a court martial, which is supreme during a state of siege, to six months' imprisonment and £50 fine. At the same time an order has been given that the same penalty will be inflicted on any money-changer engaged in purchasing caimés in advance. The Saraffs, or money-changers, talk at the present moment of shutting up their shops, having the double fear of backsheeshing the agents of the police on the one hand, and of police denunciations on the other. The Jewish money-changers, who are mostly honest though poor men, are likely to have a lively time. The Government is convinced that it can regulate the price of its currency, and that it is the Jews and other money-changers who do all the mischief and make the price of the 100 piastre note oscillate, as it did yesterday, between 230 and 260 in six hours.

The letter below relates to the question of the blockade of the Black Sea Ports, and the way in which the Turkish mode of conducting it affected the rights and obligations of the neutral Powers:—

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *December*.—The question of the efficiency, and, therefore, of the legal existence, of the Turkish blockade is one which must, sooner or later, come before the English public. The facts necessary for the formation of an opinion on it are these. At the beginning of the war the Turkish Government issued an official notification stating that the whole line of the Russian coast on the Black Sea was to be blockaded, and that the blockade would be maintained by an Ottoman fleet in sufficient force. A proposal was made to station a vessel in the Bosphorus, but the representatives of the Powers, with Mr. Layard at their head, refused to allow any such violation of the treaties by which the waters

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of the Bosphorus are made neutral. For some time no vessels attempted to run the blockade. Obviously it was a great risk for any vessel to do so, because three miles from the Black Sea end of the Bosphorus, the Ottoman Government could station a vessel or two, and count almost with certainty on a capture. Presently, however, as I reported in your columns several weeks ago, it got whispered about that vessels had come in from the Black Sea without molestation, and though it was perfectly known in Constantinople that they had come from Russian ports, they were allowed to pass through to their respective destinations. It was openly stated at the time that permission was given to these vessels by the Ottoman authorities, and I believe there can be no reasonable doubt whatever of the fact. In at least one case, which was brought under my own knowledge, a vessel left here avowedly with permission to go to Russia, and returned without hindrance. How many more went I am unable to say. It began, indeed, to be considered as quite a regular and permitted traffic. Probably backsheesh had to go somewhere, but that was nobody's business except of the givers and receivers.

A Prize Court was instituted, and ruled in all the cases brought before it until the 17th of November, that if a vessel had escaped the line of the blockading squadron she could not be captured. It is no secret, indeed, that the legal advisers of the Porte were of this opinion. They held with certain, though by no means with all, of the Continental authorities on the law of blockade, that the line of the blockading squadron once broken through, there was no right to capture a blockade runner during the further continuance of the voyage, or, at least, unless the chase had been begun and was continued till capture. Suddenly, however, a change was made in the opinion of the Prize Court, and the curious part about it is that the change was exactly contemporaneous with certain representations made to the Porte by Mr. Layard.

The truth is, that when everybody in Constantinople knew that vessels were allowed to come from Russia, Italians, Germans, and others began to ask why they should not be allowed to bring away some of the grain of Russia. Moreover, their

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ambassadors agreed with their view of the case, and openly stated that in their view the blockade ought to be considered as null. Null, either because it was not effective, or because privileges were given to certain vessels and not to others. If the Turks could stop ingress or egress to Russian ports and would not, then the rule which international law lays down that a blockade which is not applied equally to all is illegal. If the Turks, on the other hand, could not stop ingress and egress, then the blockade was ineffective, and by the fourth article of the Declaration of Paris was illegal.

Representations of this kind were, I believe, made to Mr. Layard. No one among the representatives of foreign Powers had the opportunity of knowing so well as he that vessels were leaving Russian ports for Turkey and elsewhere, because, by an arrangement between England and Turkey, our Government takes charge in Russia of the interest of Turkish subjects during the war, just as in Constantinople the German Government protects the interests of Russian subjects. Accordingly many, perhaps most of these vessels, would have to get their papers in Russian ports from the English consul. Representations, as I have said, were made to Mr. Layard, and he, in return, made representations to the Porte, and very properly protested against what could only be regarded as either an ineffectual or a not impartial blockade. These representations exactly coincide with a change in view in the ruling of the Prize Court.

On the 17th of last month, a vessel which had been arrested in the Bosphorus was condemned as a blockade runner, and avowedly on the ground that the Court had now adopted the English and American view, the reading of international law supported by Lushington and Wheaton: that the blockading squadron has the right to arrest a blockade runner until she has completed her voyage. The consternation which this decision caused among a large class of merchants in the place, who had evidently made up their minds that the Government intended, for a consideration, to allow blockade running, was very great. That the Court was right according to English law there can, I believe, be no doubt. But

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there were other considerations which the Court overlooked, but which the representatives of the nations to which the arrested ships belong will not overlook.

A considerable number of vessels, nearly thirty I believe, have since been arrested at anchor in the Bosphorus. The Embassies are at present much occupied by the course which they will adopt; but I think it probable that the Italian and the Greek will distinctly protest against the arrests as illegal. I believe that no vessel under the British flag has even endeavoured to run the blockade, although some of the cargoes under the flags of Greece and Italy belong to British subjects. Count Corti, the Italian Minister, ought to be, and is probably, one of the first of living authorities on the question of blockade, from the fact of his long experience in the decision of the British claims arising out of the American war; and he does not hesitate to express a strong opinion on the illegality of the arrests in question. The grounds for declaring the arrests illegal are principally that they were made in neutral waters, and that there can be no arrest where the Government was granting permission to many ships to pass through from Russia, and even to go to Russia and to return.

The waters of the Bosphorus were neutralized by the Treaty of Adrianople, and by the capitulations have been made the waters of each nationality which had a ship anchored in them. European nations have never admitted Turkey within the circle of civilized nations, and Turkey has, by the treaties, divested herself of so much of the sovereign power as by these treaties or capitulations she has conceded to other nations. It is upon this condition of things that we have in Constantinople and throughout Turkey a series of national jurisdictions, or true *imperia in imperio*. A Frenchman here is in France, an Englishman in England, and so on, within certain well-defined limits. The Turkish Government cannot arrest in the port of Constantinople even one of its own subjects on board an English or other foreign merchant vessel. When it wants to make such an arrest, it sends to the consular authority to which the ship belongs, and obtains police from thence. Nor is this state of things

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affected by the war between Russia and Turkey, because the capitulations expressly provide that in case of war between Turkey and any other Power, the rights as fixed by the capitulations of other Powers are not to be in anywise affected. Such a condition of jurisdiction is a remarkable one, but it exists, and its existence is, indeed, absolutely necessary for the safety and protection of the foreign communities here.

No one, so far as I know, who has had any knowledge of the subject, however much he may have been in love with the Turks, has ever thought of suggesting that the foreign communities should be handed over to Turkish jurisdiction. Foreigners have a belief that in the last resort they can obtain justice in a law court, and, therefore, conduct their trade on that hypothesis. The native merchants, Greeks, Armenians, and Bulgarians, have long since lost any belief in the possibility of obtaining justice in the place where once Justinian's jurisprudents established legal principles for all time, and they conduct their business accordingly.

I know of no instance where the Turks have ever claimed the right to arrest a vessel in the Bosphorus before the arrests in question. I imagine, however, that for certain police purposes they could do so, as, for example, if a vessel were smuggling. In such case, however, they would at once hand over the vessel to the authority to which she belonged, with a request that she would be detained until the charges were examined. The arrest of the blockade runners was made by the Turks while they were at anchor, and in most cases after they had been in the Bosphorus for some days. There was of course no pretence of capture. They had run the blockade and had come to an anchorage in neutral waters—in waters where the Powers had refused to allow the Government to place a ship for the purpose of capture.

The affair has now become a diplomatic one, and, unless some means be found of avoiding the difficulty, may lead to lively correspondence at least. There can be little doubt that the Turkish Government gave their notice of blockade and conducted their court of prize under the impression that when a vessel had once escaped beyond the line of the blockading

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squadron she had escaped altogether. They have now changed their opinion—have adopted what is probably the right rule, but in avoiding one error they have fallen into another. Having failed to capture the vessels before entering the Bosphorus, and while the voyage was in existence, they quietly arrest them while at anchor in neutral waters. Having also allowed a number of vessels to pass, some by connivance, some by neglect, some undoubtedly by express permission, and some by the decision of their court that they could not be lawfully detained, they need not be surprised that Governments to which blockade-running ships belong claim the same right for their subjects which has been granted to those of other Powers. Two of the ambassadors openly state that they will not allow their vessels to be condemned, and it is pretty clear that they have international law on their side.

The following letters from another correspondent transfer our attention from Constantinople to the Danube:—

§ GIURGEVO, *January 2nd.*—Now that Plevna has fallen, and men have time to look at other places which have figured in this war, or are likely to do so still, a few words about Rustchuk from a Giurgevo point of view are not out of place.

I drove through the shell-battered town here on my way to Slobosia to see as many of the sixteen batteries that compose the Russian strength as possible. The town itself shows more signs of life than it did, several shops being open. The mantle of snow also helps to put a gloss on it by covering up the deep engraving many a Turkish shell has marked on its houses. Emerging from the town, the sleigh follows the high road that runs westward on an embankment by the Danube towards Slobosia. A chain of sentries shows clearly out, like black patches on the snow. Every now and then there are three rifles with fixed bayonets piled, apparently put out to take care of themselves in the open plain. As we approach the first pile out pops a soldier's head, like a rabbit out of a hole, and I find each relief has got a cunningly con-

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structed underground shelter, not very large certainly, but, what is of more importance, very warm. The commanding officer's house turns out to be a very much decorated sort of pavilion, which is, he explains to me, surrounded by a sort of pleasure garden, in summer much frequented by the Giurgevo people.

As usual with Russian officers, I received a most courteous reception, and his office work completed, my host and I get into a sleigh and go off to the batteries. I always flattered myself my nerves were as good as my neighbours', but must confess to feeling uncomfortable when, taking his cigar from his mouth, the colonel calmly remarks, "This high road here, which we are now on, is the most dangerous place we have. You see the shells generally fly high of the batteries, light a few yards behind, and sweep the ground across the road." A few yards further and the sleigh stuck fast in the snow; we start only to stick again, and at the end of what seemed a long time, and must have been five minutes, my companion says, "I think we really must get out." It is needless to remark I lost no time in doing so, and bade good-bye to the road with great cheerfulness.

The village of Slobosia presents a very desolate appearance. It was, in the first place, knocked about a good deal by shells, and since its inhabitants found that they would probably be kept out of their houses all winter, they returned and took away all beams, doors, &c., to build winter quarters elsewhere. The best preserved house is four bare walls, without roof, door, or woodwork in the windows. The snow has completely changed the appearance of the batteries. The line of the parapet and embrasures are all so toned down that one doesn't recognize them, and if it were not for the well-swept paths and gun platforms, you might walk quite into a battery before you knew of its existence.

Approaching from the other side, that is, the front, you see what appears to be a gently sloping snow-covered hill. We go straight through the battery, and on the crest of the parapet, on the extreme right front, I am shown a little hole about three feet deep. "My post. This is where I always sit when important firing is going on," says the colonel. We are now

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in the centre of a line of sixty-four guns (sixteen batteries of four guns each). The battery No. 7, at which we are, is the most advanced one, those on the right and left bending gradually back, following the turn of the Danube. The distance from here to the nearest Turkish battery, which is in Rustchuk itself, is 2,000 metres. It seems less, the mosques, minarets, and big buildings standing out very clearly, though the day is far from a bright one, and the sounds of dogs barking and men shouting come plainly across the water.

I am told that sometimes they can hear the word of command to fire in the Turkish battery opposite. Immediately below the line of Russian batteries which occupy the high ground is a shallow stream now frozen over, part of the Danube; further towards Rustchuk is an island about five kilomètres long. This is covered with wood, always marshy, and in floods inundated. Behind this comes the Danube proper, a swift-running stream, 600 yards broad. The direction of the river is from SW. to NE., with a bend at each side of the town rather more to the north. This bend of the river affects both sides.

The Turkish line of defence being a curved one, with the concave side to their front, the curved line of the Russians presents the convex side to their enemy. On the Rustchuk side the ground rises suddenly from the water's edge, so the Turkish batteries are for the most part close to the river. On the south-west of the town the cliffs rise almost precipitously, and on this high ground are two batteries of field artillery, which have done the Turks good service. The Russian officers say that the straight shooting of these guns is marvellous, and they are naturally curious to know who commands them. With regard to the shooting of the Turkish artillery generally, the difference on different days is very marked, sometimes very wild, and on occasions very accurate. This points to there being some very good officer who occasionally directs.

The Russian shooting has been very good. They put up a battery at Giurgevo to keep down the fire of the "Round Battery," the extreme right battery of the Turkish position, which had been doing a good deal of harm in the town of

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Giurgevo, and in one day dismounted its guns, and gave the Turks so good an opinion of their skill that the Round Battery has not again been occupied. The Turks also had a screened battery. A lucky Russian shell set the screen on fire and burnt it down. This burning business is, after all, a doubtful business, as the Turks fire away all the same from the now opened battery. The Russian guns comprise 8-inch howitzers, 6-inch steel position guns, and 6-inch bronze guns, all breechloading. The howitzers are sighted by means of a quadrant placed in the trunnion of the gun, which may be old, but is new to me.

The way these guns are kept is beyond all praise; and as the colonel pats the enormous howitzer, and says it is the best gun in the world, I wonder if he is right, or if the "powers that be" who have decided on muzzleloaders for our army know better. His opinion is one of great weight. For four years did he work at Birmingham, for two years in America, and in peace time he is the head of a steam-engine and gun factory in Siberia, and now a leader of men, and as good at practice in war as at theories in peace time. The calibre of the Turks' guns is smaller. For my part, however, I am not convinced that they have no larger guns because they have not fired them off, and it is quite possible that when Rustchuk is invested the Russians may find 8-inch guns opposed to them. It is only natural to suppose that if they have big guns they would put them on the weakest side.

The first battery we entered was a "sunk" battery of four 8-inch howitzers. The four guns are placed on platforms about four feet below the general level of the ground, and about twenty yards apart between each gun is left a solid ridge of earth as a traverse; beneath the traverses are shelters or magazines. Around each traverse, and in all places where men have to move, trenches are cut, about five feet deep, so as to ensure as much as possible the safety of all. In front and on the flanks of the line in which the guns stand, and at a distance of about twenty yards, is a solid earthen parapet, about twenty-four feet thick. Aim is taken by small pointed sticks placed in the ground on the crest of the parapet. The trench is continued beyond the outer gun of each battery,

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and on the side of the trench next the front are dug out little cabins, in which the garrison seems to spend a very happy time of it. The only difference between the howitzer batteries and the 6-inch gun ones is that the embrasures of the latter are a little more cut away. There are always three look-out men when firing is going on: one, with a telescope on a tripod, to note the effect of the shots of his own battery; one to watch the jets of smoke from the battery opposed to it, so as to give timely notice of the coming shell, and the usual sentry.

The effect of these men really doing what they are set to do, and the effect of keeping every man not on duty under cover, is that the Russian losses have been wonderfully small—twenty-four men killed. Three days ago a sentry gave notice that a column of about 2,000 men and two guns were approaching Rustchuk from the east by the Varna chaussée. A shell was at once fired at them; the whole column disappeared promptly down the reverse slope of the road, which is here on an embankment. The captain of the battery got his guns pointed at the spot where the embankment ceases, just before the road enters the town, and, as the head of the column appeared, off went a gun. The shell passed over the mark aimed at, and struck a house, over which has been flying the red crescent. The captain seized his glass, and what was his surprise to see 200 armed soldiers issue from the supposed hospital. The house was battered down before night.

The firing generally consists of a duel between batteries, the Russians always beginning it. The Turks get through a certain amount of rifle ammunition firing across the river at the sentries; they also occasionally fire canister at the soldiers sent to cut wood on the island. The firing is by no means of daily occurrence, and both sides evidently think it useless to play at war when in a short time probably Rustchuk will be in a state of siege and the real work will begin. With regard to the probable siege one or two points are evident. No single battery of the Russians on this side of the Danube can in any case be moved nearer to Rustchuk than it is at present. No assault can be made from this side unless the Danube is frozen over; and even then with 600

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yards of smooth ice to cross in front of a watchful enemy is strongly against success. The Turks have had ample time to make as many earthworks as they think necessary, and, with the experience the Russians have lately had, they will think twice before they throw away men's lives for little advantages.

The Russians have a great idea of Turkish earthworks, and I am quite convinced they do not rate them a bit too highly. Last year I saw work thrown up by our own engineers at Chatham under the most favourable conditions in peace, and now I can show you work done by the Turk under fire which will stand comparison with any of it. This all goes to show that the tactics displayed in the latter days of Plevna will be carried out here, and I venture to predict the history of Rustchuk will be first, surrounded; second, incessant shell-fire and starvation; third, surrendered. This all wants time, but neither snow nor rain will ever quite stop the Russian movements, though it may impede them. Their soldiers are probably the best clad army in the world; the usual complaints, the result of cold and exposure, seem to have no effect on them; and, taking the sick list here as an example, they are healthier far than in the summer. In the heat, fever accounted for 30 per cent. of the whole artillery corps; now sickness is unknown.

§ Giurgevo, *January 3rd.*—The bombardment commenced again this morning, and is still steadily going on, each side firing the same number of shots—waiting for each other in the most courteous manner. It is not universal, but confined to the central batteries of both sides. I visited one of the Russian beacon posts this morning. The system of signals at night by fire is perfect in its simplicity, almost impossible to go wrong, and might be entrusted to the stupidest private in any service. Not that this is the case here, for I find it in charge of an officer, who not only seems to know his own infantry work, but is equally well up in siege work, artillery fire, fortification, and field movements. On all these points we had a chat, after he had pointed out what was to be seen from the post. I had a good look at the Turkish line of sentries through my glass, and came to the conclusion from

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their movements that they are short of clothes. I watched thirty of them that lined the curved river bank down stream of Rustchuk, and every one of these men betrayed symptoms of cold. I then looked at the Russian lines, and found the men walking about in their usual leisurely fashion. The importance of this point cannot be overrated. One man comes off his post fresh and well, ready to eat, go to sleep, and be watchful again; the other has to contend with a regular drain of his constitution, and every fresh exposure renders him less able to bear the next, till at last you hear of a case such as was reported yesterday by a spy.

A Turkish outpost of eight men had been frozen to death. The cold is most intense, and I find it actual pain to stand still for more than a quarter of an hour, though clad in furs and with porpoise-hide boots. The main channel of the river here shows no signs of freezing over, and probably the Russian commanders are glad of it, for, as soon as it is frozen, the people here will probably be visited by small bands of Turks, who, after cutting as many persons' throats as possible, will be off again on the appearance of the military. The force here, though small, is a complete little army, composed of infantry, cavalry, field artillery, and engineers. The outposts and pickets are so arranged that it would be impossible for any force which even knew their arrangement to get through on the darkest night and attack the batteries.

War prices seem to be coming down. A Russian officer tells me that a few days ago three officers had to pay twenty-three napoleons for a sleigh from Simnitza here. It is somewhere about a napoleon a mile, and the sum total probably three times the worth of the sleigh, ponies, and harness. I have just made a bargain, after an argument which has lasted two days, for a sleigh to go to Simnitza for five napoleons.

§ Mimmicea, *January 8th.*—Since the breaking of the bridges between Sistova and Simnitza communication across the Danube has been kept up by pontoons rowed by sailors. The river is full of large masses of floating ice, which renders the service a dangerous one. Seventeen persons were drowned in attempting the passage in a private boat.

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The trip, formerly occupying a few minutes, now takes from one to three hours. The pontoons are crowded with officers on duty and deeply laden with money in boxes and sheepskin coats. No other goods are taken. On the 6th and 8th the fog interrupted this traffic, and it is likely to be often interrupted by the same cause. Only a hard frost, by freezing the Danube over, can allow of the full passage of the necessary stores.

Enormous quantities of provisions and clothing are stocked in Simnitza. Carts daily arrive with more. Hay is not to be bought. The draft cattle, fed alone on Indian corn, die in great numbers, and the difficulties, always great, of transporting supplies from the railway at Fratesti and Giurgevo, will be increased greatly by this alone. Either of the following causes will bring all transport to a standstill. A thaw will render every road impassable, every small stream a torrent, and the Danube for some time a still more dangerous river, by detaching large masses of ice at present adhering to its banks. Snow will block up the roads, and by making each load harder to draw will give the draft cattle, at present worked to death, a quicker release from their miserable life. Hard frost alone can be of service.

The question arises, if the war continues, whence are the ranks daily thinning of ponies and bullocks to be filled? Already carts from all the surrounding countries can be seen in Simnitza. Bessarabia, Hungary, Wallachia, and Moldavia are represented by both man and beast. Carters unable to fulfil their contracts of delivering their loads in Sistova, and ruined by the war prices here, are daily running away, leaving the contractors under whom they work losers by reason of the large advances they have already made them.

In Bucharest may be seen sacks containing bread and biscuit, sheepskin coats, made in Russia for the army, and sent away from thence two months ago, which have not only not been delivered, but it is not known where they are, so great is the confusion. These goods have to be forwarded by the carts I have alluded to as at Simnitza, or those now on the road between Fratesti and that place, or else by the new line of railway just constructed between these two places. With

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regard to the railway, in two spots it is so exposed that the slightest wind drifts the snow over the line and makes it impassable. The engines are old, almost worn out, some of the worst having leaky boilers, so that in the distance between Fratesti and Bucharest (thirty-five miles) the engine has often to leave the train on the line to go in search of water. The passenger train that left Bucharest for Fratesti at 9.50 A.M. on the 7th took fifteen hours to arrive at the latter place. The train that left Felingivo at 6 A.M. on the 8th arrived at Bucharest at 10.30 A.M. on the 9th. This aptly describes the railway communication.

A thaw has now set in. Most of the provisions alluded to are in sacks or light boxes, in open cases or piled in heaps on the bran on the bare ground. Those that have been piled for some time are covered with snow. The damage if the thaw continues will be incalculable.

The new bridge at Simnitza, which up to the 7th had been slowly going on, was stopped by the frost. The works will now be resumed, but there is no chance of the bridge being serviceable for several months. Communication across the Danube at Petroshani and Nicopolis is conducted by boat.

The letters subjoined are from a naval correspondent, who, as will be seen, was at Sebastopol when the *Russia* towed into that port her prize, the *Mercene*, which had been captured in so remarkable a manner in the Black Sea.

|| SEBASTOPOL, *December 20th.*—Since October I have been roaming about the Crimea, visiting friends, and anxiously waiting for the arrival of the new cargo steamer that has been prepared for my friend, Captain Baranoff (the *Russia*), and in which he has most kindly offered me a cabin. As it is now hourly expected here, I have returned to be in readiness to embark. Concerning our plans, of course I am in ignorance, nor should I feel justified in publishing them if it were otherwise. When we have carried them out you may be sure I will lose no time in sending you an account of our cruise, and I sincerely hope it will not be an unfor-

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tunate one, for I am sure every Englishman must feel rather inclined to admire the plucky manner in which the ridiculous Black Sea "fleet" of Russia has bearded the Moslem's powerful navy.

Whereabouts the ironclads are, or what they are doing, of course I do not know, but I can inform you that the *Constantine*, the *Vesta*, and the *Vladimir*, have been for the last two months steaming about the Black Sea on whatever business they are engaged in, without apparently troubling themselves as to whether there is a blockade or not. About six weeks ago an ironclad and a corvette made their appearance, and endeavoured to capture another salt barge off Eupatoria. The proprietor managed, however, to sink it before they could get hold of it, and the Turks ran away after getting a shot or two from the shore.

If the Turkish navy were not more or less under the influence of Admiral Hobart Pacha, I should say it deserves a great deal of credit for not having bombarded villages, villas, &c., on the Russian coast. As, however, such work could have gained it nothing, it has wisely abstained from doing so. In the beginning of the war the Sultan was apparently deluded by some wag at Constantinople to publish an invitation to the Crimean Tartars, "groaning" under Russian tyranny, to revolt. The Crimean Tartars, who are the happiest set of lazy rascals, perhaps, under the sun, responded by offering up prayers to Allah in their mosques for the success of the Russian army; and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that unless the Sultan of all the Ottomans can send at least 100,000 troops to the Crimea, the hoisting of the green banner of the Prophet will affect the Crimean Tartars about as much as it will me.

We have had, and are still having, the most lovely weather; the sun was so hot to-day that I had, almost in self-defence, to wear my Indian solar topee. I have passed many winters here, but this is certainly the finest. There has not been a vestige of frost as yet, but perhaps we shall have to pay for it in January and February. At Aloupha Castle, the seat of Prince Woronzow, where I was on a visit about ten days ago, we had raspberries and strawberries frequently at dessert,

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and his gardener expects even to have them for Christmas. These are not in any way forced, but grow in the kitchen-gardens as ours do. So warm has been this winter that on the south coast, when I left, even Russian ladies were still enjoying sea-bathing. Greek schooners constantly arrive with lemons, for which we are grateful, but not to the extent of granting them cargoes of grain. Consequently ten or a dozen of them are at anchor here disconsolate. The buildings I spoke of in my last are finished, and I hear crammed with grain. The oyster fishery, owing to there being only chance occasions for sending to Odessa, is at a discount. Excellent oysters are now to be bought for twenty kopecks a hundred. As the rouble is now worth two shillings, and there are 100 kopecks in the rouble, I fancy we have a slight advantage over the London market in the purchase of this luxury.

|| On Board SS. "Russia," Sebastopol, *December 29th.*—On Wednesday, at about 9 A.M., all Sebastopol was assembled at the Graffskoia landing-place to again welcome the hero of the *Vesta*, who, in command of his new steamer, was signalled as approaching. In rear of the *Russia*, at a distance of about half a mile, a strange three-masted screw steamer was observed, apparently of about 800 or 1,000 tons. That it was a prize we had little doubt, though it was not till she was passing within almost a hundred yards of me that I distinguished two very small flags, indicating by their position that success had again followed the career of Captain Baranoff.

The landing and reception of this favourite of fortune were thoroughly Russian. As soon as I could manage to shake hands with him he told me my cabin was ready, and that he purposed leaving in a few hours. Accordingly I hurried to my quarters to pack up and write you a few lines, and later on I sent you a telegram. I have now little more to say about the capture. The *Russia* left Odessa on the 22nd inst., and the following day, when off Penderekli, she encountered the *Mercene*, carrying 793 soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks, twenty officers, including a lieutenant of the Sultan's yacht *Izzedin*,

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and a few women and children, making a total with the crew of 897.

It appears that the *Mercene* mistook the character of the *Russia*, and thinking she would prove an easy capture for the troops, allowed her to approach and get between them and the coast, which was about five miles off. When too late she discovered that she had made a mistake, and at the third shot she hauled down her flag. Captain Baranoff, having put an officer and twenty-six men on board, and removed the Turkish officers to the *Russia*, at once made for this port, where she arrived with the prize as I have described.

To return to the movements of the *Russia*. The captain purposed leaving at once for Odessa with the prisoners, but in the afternoon a storm that had been gradually brewing all day burst on us, and by midnight, even in this landlocked harbour, the motion of the steamer might have deranged the digestion of landsmen. At daybreak yesterday, the gale having abated, we put to sea, but had not got a dozen miles from shore when the captain told me he should put back, as the roll further on was too heavy for him to risk. Accordingly we returned to our moorings and landed the prisoners here. The colonel of the troops and his two servants were despatched by rail to Simpheropol. The colonel, who dined, &c., with the captain, had a melancholy expression of countenance, but I observed his appetite was healthy and his religious scruples concerning liquids by no means severe. His officers, who messed in the wardroom, were also not bigoted in this respect. To judge from the empty bottles on the table, I think most of them approved of the sherbet of the infidel.

About one o'clock yesterday the commander-in-chief, his Highness the Prince Woronzow, paid us a visit, and after lunch we all proceeded to visit the prize, which is lying at the Custom House wharf. The *Mercene* was formerly the *Sherriff*, and was a passenger and cargo steamer between Constantinople and Batoum, taken for this occasion by the Government as a transport. She is a strongly-built and handsomely-fitted screw steamer of 1,400 tons, worth, I

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should say, from twenty to twenty-five thousand pounds sterling. I cannot say she was clean; but 793 Turkish soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks are not the most cleanly cargo, and from what I saw of the prisoners, I think, if I was forced to take a trip either with them or with a cargo of slaves from the African coast, I should cast my lot in with my black brethren. The weather has cleared, and we start, I believe, to-night, destination of course unknown. I will send you particulars of our cruise directly we return, which I fancy will be in a week or ten days.

|| SS. "RUSSIA," *December 30th*, 7 P.M., ON THE BLACK SEA.—Circumstances over which we had no control prevented our leaving Sebastopol yesterday as we had intended; but this afternoon, about 2 P.M., we steamed out of harbour, and are now about sixty miles on our way to Odessa. The gale has gone down, but has left a long swell, calculated to seal up the ship-boy's eyes and rack his brains. We have just finished dinner, and the captain has adjourned to the bridge, to pass, I should say, anything but an agreeable night, for irrespective of a cold north-easter, with sleet blowing right in our teeth, we know of five ironclads which are supposed to have left Sulina in search of us. My friend, with his usual generosity, invited me to keep watch with him, suggesting that I ought to be able to describe any affair from the commencement. I changed the conversation, but not my intentions, which were on no account to quit my present snug quarters till the shooting began, or at any rate till there was something more worth seeing than outer darkness, which at the present moment is the aspect of the Euxine. There are also other inducements to remain. The captain's cigars are excellent, and the sofa all that one can desire. An indiarubber ball at my side on being pressed produces a telephone squeak in the buffet, which brings my young friend Terracinta (of *Vesta* notoriety) to supply my wants, and a bright fire in the stove, together with other comforts, would render desertion wicked on my part; so I purpose remaining where I am. A sailor who has just come in tells me it is only a squall, so with a pious hope that if Hobart is looking

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after us he is enjoying the weather as much as my friend, I shall smoke another cigar and turn in.

ODESSA, *December* 31*st*, 2 P.M.—After twenty-four hours of bad weather, we have arrived without encountering the Moslem. I will add a line or two every day to say what we are doing. At present we are (the captain and self) going on shore.

ODESSA, *January* 1*st*.—The *Russia* is coaling.

ODESSA, *January* 2*nd*.—Captain Baranoff has gone by land to Nicolaieff. The steamer is still coaling.

ODESSA, *January* 4*th*.—Captain Baranoff has returned, and I hope we shall get off to-morrow. The difference in the reports concerning the numbers of prisoners arises from the fact that the gallant corps increased its officers after capitulating, their first idea being that the private soldiers would only be hanged or shot, while the officers would be reserved for fleying, impaling, roasting, and other well-authenticated Russian modes of showing consideration to captives. The rank and file predominated considerably, but after a few days, it being discovered that the officers were not only alive but getting fat, there was great promotion from the ranks, and when I last heard the list of officers they were increasing not only in numbers but in rank, it having come to their knowledge that Bimbashis got more than other bashis, &c. By this time I dare say there are Pachas and Ghazis; hence the discrepancies. The numbers in my letter of the 29th being taken from the latest census before we handed the prisoners over to the Crown authorities, are probably the most correct. No prisoners came here with us, nor did the *Russia* leave Sebastopol for the expedition. The capture was made between Penderekli and the Bosphorus, at about five miles from the shore. If your readers will look out Penderekli on the map they will perhaps be astonished at the audacity of the proceeding. They need not look far from the mouth of the Bosphorus.

ODESSA, *January* 5*th*.—We leave at two this afternoon. You may expect to hear either of me or from me in a week or

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ten days at latest. I forgot to mention that on board the prize were mail bags, which were forwarded unopened to St. Petersburg. The colonel of the troops, of whom I spoke in my last, was robbed by his own men in the hurry of disembarking from the prize. Some of his property was discovered on the person of one of the soldiers, but I cannot say whether it was a Turk, Circassian, or Bashi-Bazouk. The colonel was much impressed with Baranoff's kindness. When I said good-bye to him he showed me a heavy silver cigar-case that the captain had given him as a souvenir, and said, "Commandant dobra, dobra," which means "good" in Russ. He had substantial reasons besides the souvenir for saying so.

|| SEBASTOPOL (ON BOARD THE "RUSSIA"), *January 6th.*—We arrived here this morning from Odessa, having had a cold but interesting run across. Odessa harbour began to freeze on the 4th inst., and I fancy, from the difficulty we had to break out, that for the next month or six weeks that interesting commercial town is secure from any attack of ironclads. We got clear of the ice about 4 P.M., and made direct for Sebastopol, all going on well till about 2 A.M., when we suddenly discovered that we were not alone on the face of the waters.

Lights, evidently signals, flashed at a short distance from one another, and warned us that Islam was proving her supremacy on the Euxine. It was aggravating, as we had made plans for to-day (which is our Christmas), but as there were certainly three if not more ironclads between us and Sebastopol, those plans began to look doubtful. Nicolaieff and Odessa, it must be remembered, were closed to us by the ice, Kertch also, so there seemed to be nothing to do but steam about the Black Sea till the war or our coal was finished. Captain Baranoff, however, had made up his mind to be at Sebastopol to-day, and soon arranged his plans. Finding that the lights were proceeding in a southerly direction, the Turks having, as they thought, satisfactorily explored the north, he accompanied them in a parallel line till they were well clear of the Taganhyt

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Lighthouse, when, favoured by the darkness of the night, he slipped round their stern, and got into Sebastopol only two hours later than he had intended. I did not myself witness the best part of this fun, having turned in about half-past twelve, and, as we keep profound silence on board, I might have known nothing of it till morning if I had not, about 3 A.M., looked at my pocket-compass, when, to my intense astonishment, I found we were steering north, instead of south by east. I was on deck at once, and though the lights were then out of sight we still had plenty of excitement in the sixty miles' run from Taganhyt to this port.

We confidently expected that there would be at least one ironclad cruising outside to attack us, in case we ran the blockade. Of course we none of us expect that this can always go on. The Turks are certainly the most imbecile naval power that the world has ever seen, but one or other of our corsairs, I suppose, will come to grief if the war continues.

It seems incredible that unarmoured merchant steamers should, with perfect impunity (except in the case of the *Vesta's* fight, when she suffered for her audacity), run into Turkish harbours, blow their torpedoes up under the ironclads, carry off even a transport with five times their force on board, and cruise about within a few miles of the Bosphorus, not to mention the supreme contempt that they have shown throughout the year to Turkey's claim to naval supremacy. All this seems and reads like romance, but it is nevertheless an historical fact for the year 1877, and if the Turk sinks all four of us in 1878 it will never entitle him to hold up his head as a maritime Power. The Black Sea "fleet," the *Vesta*, the *Constantine*, the *Vladimir*, and the *Russia*, are at present all safe in this harbour. The yacht *Swadia* is at Odessa.

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CHAPTER X.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ETROPOL BALKANS.

Reinforcements for General Gourko's Army.—Misery of the Turkish Soldiers.—Defective Arrangements of the Russians.—The Battle-field of the Vid.—Forlorn Condition of Bulgarian Towns and Villages.—A Goat-path in the Mountains.—Deep Snow and Severe Temperature.—Valuable Services of the Red Cross Society.—Heroism and Devotion of the Surgeons and Students.—Forward Movement.—Great Number of Sick and Wounded.—Prevalence of Frost-bite.—Superiority of the Turkish System.—Miseries of Life in Orkanieh.—Plan of the Advance.—Amount and Distribution of the Forces.—General Gourko and his Staff.—A Neglected Bridle-path.—General Rauch and his Men.—General Maglovsky.—A Snowstorm.—The Village of Curiak.—The Kuban Cossacks.—Capture of a Transport Train.—Wilhelminoff's Column.—The Balkans Crossed.—The Kuban and the Foundling.—Incidents of the Campaign.—Failure of Donderville's Enterprise.—Attack on the Turkish Positions at Taskose.—General Mirkovitch Wounded.—Valour of the Turks.—Capture of Taskose.—Baker Pacha's Despatch.—An Exciting Chase.—Fight at Gorny Bagaroff.—Cost of the Passage of the Balkans.

THE fall of Plevna, involving both the capture of the most able of the Turkish commanders, with his army, and the release of the army of investment from its long and arduous duty, was promptly followed by tokens of a determination to prosecute with vigour the advance across the Balkans. General Gourko's progress had been arrested, partly by the inclemency of the weather and partly by the insufficiency of his force, originally amounting to about 30,000 men; but he had at least succeeded in removing all cause for apprehension from the threatened advance of Mehemet Ali, or his successor, Chakir Pacha; and much more than this the Russian commanders could hardly have contemplated in the circumstances in which his bold enterprise was undertaken. Owing to heavy storms

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delay took place in the departure of reinforcements for General Gourko's army; but it will be seen that the difficulties of the movement were eventually surmounted.

The letters following are from the correspondent who had lately left the headquarters of General Gourko for a hasty visit to Plevna, as already mentioned:—

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, ORKANIEH, IN THE BALKANS, *December 24th.*—The snow was lying two or three inches deep, and was still falling fast, as I jostled and fought my way along the crowded Sofia road a few days ago between Plevna and the Vid—a discouraging start off for a long and tedious journey into the heart of the Balkans. Plevna offered enough interest, and more than enough excitement, but several days before on the trip down from the Balkans I had met the reinforcements marching to join the army of General Gourko, and, as nothing except lack of numbers had delayed his advance, the probabilities of a speedy southward movement were too strong, and the prospect too tempting, to permit longer delay at such a distance from the actual front.

From the town limits to the bridge the road was lined with boxes of Turkish ammunition, shells, and broken caissons; and muskets were piled up in one place like corded wood in a forest. The empty transport waggons coming in, and the heavily loaded ones slowly moving out, completely filled all the spaces between the ditches, so that progress was very slow, and only possible at all with a good amount of crowding and some hard words. The heavily-falling snow completely veiled the landscape, and after an hour's ride at a snail's pace I crossed the Vid, and had the great snow-carpeted plain before me, and undisputed passage southward. A sickening and indescribable odour came from the direction of the battle-field. I had seen many hundreds of unburied bodies there the day before, so I did not suspect any other source of the poisoned air until there became visible through the storm a long line of men, extending as far as could be seen through the flying snow. It was evident from this multitude of human

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beings, the army of Osman Pacha, filthy and without means of washing, huddled together like sheep in the snow, which, falling moist, drenched them like rain, half fed, without fires, or any comforts or necessaries, or even the most common privileges which the law of health and general sanitary precautions require—it was evident, I say, that from this mass of living uncleanliness came the overpowering stench that testified to the horrible condition of the prisoners, and their unparalleled wretchedness and misery.

Nearly 40,000 men were standing there in the driving storm, herded in great companies of several hundreds. They were wrangling and fighting among themselves for the scanty rations that were furnished them—scanty, because there was none too great a supply for the soldiers who guarded them. They huddled together and hugged tight about their bodies the thin ragged coats in the vain attempt to keep warm and dry, and as fast as the snow fell trod it into the ground with the constant motion of their feet. It seemed impossible that human beings could live under such conditions. How had they slept in the cold rain of the past week? How would they manage to live through the coming week with the snow a foot deep all around them, and cold which makes sleep a stranger to the thickly-clad Russian soldier in his straw shelter in the bivouac? I must confess that I wasn't too comfortable in the saddle, with the snow melting down the back of my neck and settling on my arms and shoulders; but the sight of these wretched creatures cut short any incipient thought to find fault with the weather, and I turned my horse's head towards the south, with the helpless feeling that was almost a torture in the presence of all the suffering in Plevna still strong within me, and found myself repeating the same phrase that on every occasion serves as an excuse and an apology for all the inconvenience and distress that so frequently result from the want of system in the Russian army: "What is to be done?"

The officer, whose duty it is to see that the marching column starts in season in the morning to arrive at the bivouac before night, finds himself and his men struggling along the muddy road in murky darkness, and with an air and a shrug that con-

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fess the inexcusable want of forethought, and at the same time give not the least assurance of improvement in the future, exclaims in a resigned tone, "What is to be done?" A detachment finds itself away from its supplies at a time when a little energy and forethought would have prevented any such occurrence. Officers and men suffer from want of food, and take it with a fatalistic resignation that is without a hint or promise of improvement. I have found a large company of officers in the mountains, having prepared for the trip a day or two before. They had brought nothing for their horses, no salt, no matches, and nothing to cut wood with. All this may seem trivial; but it is an indication of just the way affairs in general are conducted.

The history of Plevna for the first two weeks after its capture would be composed of chapters of horrors that have few parallels in modern times. I believe that there is little attempt to excuse the neglect, the criminal neglect, to properly provide for the prisoners; but any excuse—however well founded in the difficulties of transport, in the inclemency of the weather, and in the unexpected surrender of the army of Osman Pacha—can have no weight whatever in the balance against the sum total of the human suffering and the loss of life that was the result of the characteristic Russian *laisser aller*.

I arrived in Plevna only four or five days after the surrender, and the living and the dead were still lying side by side. The battle-field by the Vid presented a most ghastly spectacle, and I will not say that there were many, but I am sure there were some, wounded lying there uncared for, but still alive. The great herd of prisoners without tents, or even the miserable shelter of the holes in the ground which they had occupied during the siege, stood there in the rain, and were moved daily from place to place, as the spot where they remained a few hours became too filthy to endure. When I passed them on the morning of the snowstorm their condition was in no degree improved. Up to four days after the battle part of them had received no rations, and when I went among them they were fighting like madmen for the morsels of bread. They died by scores—for how can human nature endure so

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much?—and the night after I left them in the snow over 300 perished miserably, from exposure and hunger combined. These are the meagre facts, the few that came under my notice in a hasty visit, besides the details I have already transmitted by telegraph. The tale has not been half told, nor yet half begun, and I feel that very little justice has been done to the situation at Plevna, but the story of the victors is far more agreeable to relate, although that also has a side that is by no means attractive.

All along the Sofia road at frequent intervals are villages of perhaps 200 houses, and even more, which are deserted by the great majority of their inhabitants, the Turkish peasants having fled from the approach of the Russians, and the Bulgarians having dispersed either for fear of the Turks, or having been compelled to follow the train of the fugitives. Many of these villages were very rich in grain, hay, and straw, and the first troops that passed this way had not the slightest difficulty in finding forage and bread. The whole region abounds in trees which would have furnished fires for the army for months, but it was so much easier to pull a beam out of a house than to cut down a tree, that the soldiers when they wanted wood simply tore down the houses and burned the timbers. I have, I believe, already described how the houses fall down wherever the army halts. Some very serious accidents have already occurred from this thoughtless improvident habit of tearing the timbers out of the houses, and that is not the worst result of the destruction, as the reinforcements just arrived to this army have found out to their cost.

In Dolny Dubnik scarcely one stone is left above another. With the exception of a very few houses the entire village is flat, burned piecemeal by the soldiers. Teliche has suffered in much the same way, but perhaps half the houses are still standing, Radomirce, Lukovitza, Petreven, Jablonica, and Osikovo—everywhere the same story. The straw stacks have been pulled down and scattered wastefully over the road and in the courtyards; the Indian corn has been taken from the bins, and fed out to the animals in such abundance that half of it lies rotting on the ground where it was thrown.

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When I first came up the Sofia road my horses stood at night knee-deep in unthrashed barley straw, where the Cossacks had picketed their horses in the courtyards of the Turkish houses, and Indian corn in the ear paved the ground all about the bins. There were, too, plenty of good, clean, comfortable quarters in every village. On my way back from Plevna this time I found the greatest difficulty in obtaining even straw for the horses to eat. The troops I passed on the road bivouacked in the snow between the walls which a few weeks ago supported warm, tight roofs, and they had to thank those who had passed over the road before them for the waste of forage, destruction of the houses, and general exhaustion of the resources of the country, which, if they had been managed with anything like a provident system, would have served to supply the passing troops and the transport trains for months.

For my own part, the only way I avoided sleeping in the snow was by hurrying on past the troops I overtook on the road, reaching the village of Lukovitza, where they were to pass the night, only a few moments before the advance guard, and establishing myself and horses in a cellar just large enough for us. I had scarcely put a billet of wood across the door when the place was besieged by officers and men, who kept up at intervals all night long a tattoo on the door, accompanied with demands for admission, which, of course, I did not grant, for every inch of room was taken. They had marched the fifty-five versts from Plevna in two days, bivouacking the first night at Teliche. The snow fell all night long, and those who found no roof to shelter them wandered about until morning, trying to find a hole to crawl into to sleep. A month ago the village would have furnished comfortable quarters for the whole detachment, now it would barely shelter a battalion.

At daybreak I was on the road again, and the storm had not yet ceased, but was somewhat diminished in violence; the highway was almost knee-deep with mingled mud and snow. Turkish families, stowed away in their miserable arabas, were shivering by the roadside, where the exhausted oxen had stopped during the night. Bulgarians,

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also on their way from Plevna to their villages, advanced along the road in painful procession, toiling through the mud laden with great bundles of kitchen utensils and bedding, and scarcely moving half a mile an hour. How and where they had passed the night was a question which I did not stop to ask, because, knowing that I should arrive at the Pravca Pass only at the end of the day, for it was forty versts distant, the question of the coming night was to me a far more important and interesting one.

The whole day without a pause, except to water the horses, I pushed on past artillery, supply waggons, transport carts with wounded in almost inextricable confusion, and at dark came to the narrow defile of the Pravca Pass, and the road was so jammed with troops and artillery that it was impossible to proceed further, and it seemed as if I was nailed there for the night in the storm, with no village within two hours' ride, and even there every house overcrowded with soldiers. The only alternative to passing the night in the snow was to push on over the mountains by the goat-paths that had served at the time of the battle there to move small detachments of troops towards the flanks of the enemy. There was no little risk of losing my way in the storm, but remembering distinctly the conformation of the ground, I struck out through the woods to the left of the road, and after a couple of hours' hard work through the snow, climbing over the crags which, in fine weather, were difficult enough to scale, I came out into the plain of Orkanieh, and my tired horses made their own way along to their stable.

The snow was then eighteen inches deep on a level, and since that time several inches more have fallen. For the last week the cold has been steadily increasing, and to-day as I write the Reaumur thermometer marks seventeen degrees of cold. There is no means of heating the room except by a fire under a stone canopy, which has so fallen to pieces and gone to ruin that the smoke comes out into the room and does not find its way up the chimney. But even warm smoke would be preferable to the cold which freezes the ink on my table as I am writing, and the only reason why I don't indulge in that luxury is because it is impossible to find wood to burn. The

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Bulgarian sledges are all employed in bringing wood for the ovens and kitchens. The hedges and wicker fences have all been burned long ago. Very many houses were torn to pieces when the army first came here, and now a handful of wood is worth its weight in silver almost, and quite impossible to get at all in any quantity. The sufferings of the soldiers in the bivouacs on the mountains are simply terrible.

Hundreds have their feet and hands frozen every night, and the amount of illness resulting from exposure is alarming. Very few of the men are provided with any clothing in addition to that which they brought with them for the full campaign. They have good boots and whole overcoats, it is true, but many of them discard the former, and substitute sandals and leggings of raw hide, and a single thickness of coarse cloth is a miserable protection in this cold.

It is just at this season that the Society of the Red Cross is of the greatest possible service. There is an independent section of this society attached to the corps of the Guard, under the protection, and bearing the name, of the Princess Imperial. It is the only independent section of the society in the field, I believe, and it is this detachment alone which has made its way to the very front, and established its hospitals there. When General Gourko made the move to cut off the communications of Plevna, it was forbidden by general orders to take along any ambulances or transports, because, in case of a forced retreat, they would block the narrow country roads by which the advance was made, and impede the movements of the troops. With great difficulty the Red Cross detachment obtained permission to accompany the troops, on the condition that, if a retrograde movement were made, they would burn without the least hesitation the light waggons they took along, and leave the road free.

The battle of Gorny Dubnik resulted, as is well known, in the defeat of the Turks, with great loss for the Russians, and the number of surgeons attached to the regiments was not only quite insufficient to attend to the number of wounded that came to the rear, but there was a scarcity of necessary articles for use in the ambulances. The Red Cross established itself just across the Vid, in a deserted Cossack

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bivouac, where there were still standing the huts that had sheltered 400 Cossacks, and at this point, four or five versts away from the battle-field, assembled the great mass of the wounded who could walk, and very many who had to be carried. The waggons of the Red Cross had everything needed for the dressing of the wounds; a half-dozen doctors were there to receive and care for the wounded; a kitchen was set up, and hot tea and soup was served out to the soldiers as fast as possible. When the sun rose in the morning, over 2,000 wounded lay in the bivouac. Before night the number was nearly doubled, and for four days this little detachment of the society provided food for the great mass of wounded until the division ambulances and transports came up. Tea and warm food were served out twice a day, with spirits and wine, and by the time the transports came up for the wounded, nearly every article in the stores was used up.

Later, the same detachment, having replenished its exhausted stock of supplies, opened a hospital in Dolny Dubnik, where twenty or thirty beds were set up in a deserted house. When the movement towards the Balkans was made, there was again considerable difficulty in getting permission to follow the army, and only a limited number of waggons came along. The medical students were given the choice of staying behind or going on foot, and they unanimously chose the latter course, and every one of them marched the whole distance to Orkanieh. Two of the doctors of the detachment accompanied General Rauch on his trip over the mountains to the rear of the Pravca Pass, marched thirty-two hours with the infantry, and then dressed the wounds of the soldiers under a hot rifle-fire.

The devotion of the doctors and students, indeed of every one connected with the detachment, is so heroic, that one cannot do less than place them in the same rank with those who perform the actual deeds of valour in the face of the enemy. I have found the doctors and students encamped in the snow on the mountains, where the bullets dropped about, and the shells came whizzing in—everywhere, in fact, where there is any probability of an engagement, and consequent need

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of their service, they are sure to be on hand. Here, in Orkanieh, where not a single article of warm clothing for the troops has arrived by the military transports, the Red Cross detachment of the Princess Imperial has given out many hundreds of pairs of warm socks to the sick and the well as they were needed; over 600 Jerseys, upwards of 100 fur pelisses, 500 caps, double the number of flannel waistbands, the larger part cut and sewed by the Sisters of Charity here, and felt boots, and slippers, and the like, in great abundance. The waggons containing these stores arrived before the roads were blocked, and now there is on the way a large transport laden with similar articles of clothing, of which the officers and the soldiers alike are in the greatest need.

With the thermometer down to zero, it may well be imagined that the things distributed by the detachment have been received as if they had fallen from heaven. The Red Cross hospital, although designed for thirty beds, contains now 120, and, considering the means at hand, it is a marvel of comfort and cleanliness. As long ago as when the same detachment opened a hospital at Bogot, it established its reputation for unexampled care of the wounded, and the Emperor visited the tents on more than one occasion, and presented the Sisters with souvenirs of his visits. Here it is a great piece of good fortune for a wounded man to fall into the hands of the Red Cross, and occupy a bed in the light warm rooms of the hospital, and the number of applications for admission are quadruple the number of beds.

Not the least service this detachment renders is the nourishment of the wounded during the trip from here to the main hospitals. I have before alluded to the sufferings of the wounded men in the transports for the lack of food. It is just this want that the detachment proposes to supply. A number of food stations have been established between here and Plevna, and every transport train of wounded that passes will receive liberal quantities of warm food, the delegates of the society comprehending perfectly that first of all a wounded man requires proper nourishment. The distribution of food among the soldiers here I have not referred to par-

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ticularly, because this would be understood to be one of the general objects of the society. Immense quantities of tea, sugar, spirits, and canned provisions, have been distributed. Among the stores I noticed a number of cases from Mr. Lloyd, in the name of the British Society for the Aid of Sick and Wounded in War. Considering the difficulties of transport, the impossibility of foreseeing anything like the present condition of the army in the Balkans, or of adequately preparing for such a campaign, the aid afforded by this Red Cross detachment of the Princess Imperial is beyond all value. Such enthusiastic energy and intensity of purpose should not go unrecorded.

A few details on the composition of the detachment may not be uninteresting. It now consists of the original section of the Red Cross Society, as I have said above, under the protection of the Princess Imperial, with the three "flying ambulances," so called, sent out by the Empress. It was the doctors of these flying ambulances I referred to as accompanying General Rauch. The hospital department is provided nominally with means for fifty beds, but really furnishes three times the number. With the two doctors attached to this section, the whole number of surgeons is increased to eight. There are two delegates who superintend the establishment of the hospitals, the distribution of the stores, and the management of the transport; eighteen students of medicine, who assist in operations and act as chief nurses; forty male nurses, three Sisters of Charity, apothecary, laundress, cook, drivers, and servants. Ten waggons carry the baggage and tents, and the doctors and some of the students are now mounted. The detachment receives 40,000 francs a month for expenses, and about half of this sum goes for salaries and wages. Altogether it is the most effective section of the Red Cross Society I have yet seen in Bulgaria, doubtless partly because it has been allowed to reach its helping hand just to the point where assistance is most required; but its effectiveness is due more than anything else to the tireless energy and devotion of the individual members of the little detachment.

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+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, CURIAK, NEAR SOFIA, *December 29th.*—Early on Christmas morning began the long-deferred forward movement across the great Balkans into the valley of Sofia. The plan of the advance had been long matured, every detail most carefully studied, the ground laid out with mathematical exactness, and only the lack of troops prevented the earlier accomplishment of the movement. First, the delay at Imperial headquarters to issue orders for the march of the reinforcements intended for General Gourko; second, the severe storm and the bad state of the roads, have retarded the arrival of the additional troops until the very day before the advance was made.

It has been evident for some time that General Gourko would either have to retire from the positions he had taken on the mountains near the Baba Konak Pass, or else cross the range at any cost, for the severity of the weather made it almost impossible to bring up the supplies and ammunition, and life in the bivouacs on the mountain became daily more and more difficult. Scarcely a night passed but frozen hands and feet were counted by hundreds. Thirty soldiers were frozen to death during four days of the storm, and the number of sick from exposure amounted to more than 2,000. Before the snowstorm the mountain paths were rivers of mud, and when these froze solid they became quite impassable, and steps had to be cut with axes. The thin shelter tents, torn by the wind, and with difficulty kept fastened to the ground in the gales, were exchanged for rude huts covered with turf and logs, and holes dug in the steep banks among the trees. The transports containing warm clothing, which had been long talked of as on the road somewhere between Sistova and Orkanieh, were not even expected to arrive for weeks, and the soldiers make use of the skins of the bullocks and sheep to wrap their feet in and to make jackets of, but with such meagre resources there is little enough alleviation of the suffering from the cold; and men in the trenches along the watershed are constantly exposed not only to the bullets of the enemy near at hand, but to the insidious attacks of the frost, which too often proves a much more dreaded foe.

Doubtless the Turks suffer in an untold degree, but they have

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much more skill than the Russians, not only in constructing earthworks, but in building shelters, and often the miserably-clad infantryman behind the breastworks will be found stowed away in comfortable little huts of logs and straw, where a small fire keeps several soldiers warm, and for the time he remains there he makes these huts his home, and defends them as such. The Russian infantryman, on the contrary, rarely considers himself at home in the trenches, because he remains but a few days, and then is relieved and sent elsewhere. This constant rotation adds greatly to the comfort of the soldiers, but for actual service in earthworks is a mistake, for the soldier who lives for weeks in a breastwork learns every foot of the ground in front, and when the time comes will advance with confidence or defend his hut with desperation. The trenches at Plevna illustrated perfectly the difference between the Turk and the Russian in this respect. So here in the Balkans, while the Russians endure every discomfort on the mountain tops, I doubt not that the enemy under the same conditions is comparatively comfortable. The severe cold was not only unexpected, but is quite unseasonable, and when the reinforcements arrived they found themselves obliged to bivouac in the snow because every foot in the town of Orkanieh was already occupied.

The scenes in Orkanieh during the storm and cold surpass description. Generals quartered in fireless rooms and in mud houses, and soldiers sheltered behind piles of snow, or clustered in groups about small fires, were patiently waiting day after day. Officers came in at all hours of the day and night, many on foot from Osikovo, unable to pass on horseback because the road was blocked by cannon, exhausted, half frozen, seeking shelter which money could not buy. Salt failed, and bread became scarce. I have seen an officer give 15 francs for a small loaf. Wood was a luxury which few could obtain in any abundance, for, although there are forests in every direction, all the empty carts were used in bringing wood for the hospitals and ovens, and there were many cases of frozen feet and hands in the town itself.

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The plan of the projected advance, as indeed the whole order of the campaign thus far, is mainly due, I believe, to the chief of General Gourko's staff, General Naglovsky. The plan was as precise as a mathematical problem, and the work was laid out as explicitly for each detachment. The physical difficulties of crossing the high range that separates the valleys of Orkanieh and Sofia, in fact, the great Balkan range, were so much increased by the formation of ice, that it was altogether impossible to carry out the details of the plan. Therefore I will only give the general outline.

The army was divided into nine detachments. Three of these were to form a column, which was to cross to the west of Araba Konak and come down into the villages of Curiak, Potok, and Stolnik. The command of the advance guard of this column, consisting of two battalions of the rifle brigade, the Praobrajenski and Simionovsky Regiments, one brigade of Kuban Cossacks and sixteen guns, was entrusted to General Rauch. The entire column numbered thirty-one battalions and forty guns, the Kuban Cossacks, one squadron of Cossacks of the Caucasus, and five squadrons of Dragoons.

The second column, commanded by General Weliaminoff, composed of a brigade of the 31st Division of infantry of the line, two brigades of cavalry of the Guard, one battery of field pieces, and one horse battery, was directed to cross the range by the point marked on the Austrian map as Urmagas.

The third column, led by General Dondeville, was to turn the Turkish position on the summits east of the Pass, crossing the range where the word Bata is found on the map, debouching into the valley at Mierkovo.

The fourth column, commanded by General Schildener-Schuldner, was to demonstrate against Lutikova.

The fifth column, comprising a regiment of Grenadiers, one and a half battalions of a regiment of the line, two sotnias of Cossacks, and two guns, was to remain in position near Slatica to watch Kamarli.

With this disposition of the troops, it will easily be seen by the map that if either of the columns on the right flank reached the plain of Sofia to force the Turks, they would be menaced in the rear of their positions at Baba Konak Pass, and being

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outnumbered three to one, they would have to retire toward the Tatar Bazardjik chaussée, for no other road would be free to them.

Before daylight on Christmas morning the bugles sounded the réveille again and again, and soon the infantry crowded the streets on the march towards Vracesi. It was bitterly cold and frosty. The fog had settled down so densely that before sunrise the darkness was absolutely impenetrable, and even after daybreak objects across the narrow streets were vague and indistinct. The fog clung to the houses and trees and the clothing of the soldiers, and froze there, covering every surface with a glistening garment of pure white. At nine o'clock General Gourko and his staff left the town for the bivouac of the Dragoons on the chaussée just behind the positions there.

It was a rare spectacle this group of horsemen as they moved slowly along the ice-paved chaussée. The aides-de-camp were dressed in the most fantastic costumes. Some were in greatcoats of dressed skins ornamented with embroidery and buttons. Some were enveloped in Circassian cloaks, all doubled up with the weight of additional clothing, and with capuchons and wraps about the head. General Gourko, leading the group, was alone dressed in a simple surtout, without mufflers of any kind. He rode along apparently unconscious that the frost was turning his beard white, and covering himself and horse with frozen crystals. It resembled more a carnival cavalcade than a general with his staff, the effect being heightened by the picturesque Kuban Cossacks in the convoy with their sheepskin hats and curious weapons.

Before we had been out half an hour icicles hung from the beards and from the horses' mouths, and like a procession of so many Santa Claus we rode into the defile through the chill fog, the view being limited to the snow-laden trees along the roadside. The soldiers began to straggle, several dropped, overcome with cold and fatigue, and some were injured by falling on the ice. Shortly after we passed Vracesi the fog became thinner, and the white mountain tops glistening in the sunlight shone through the mist as if hung in the air, for

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the bases were still shrouded in vapour. A few minutes further, and we come out of the fog bank into the bright sunlight, and a warm south wind blew in our faces, melting the frost and softening the hard ice on the chaussée.

The bivouac of the Dragoons, the place of rendezvous, was situated at a point where the stream, flowing eastward from the Etropol Balkans, meets the river at the chaussée. It is here where the road turns off to cross the mountains to Curiak, not where the dotted line is on the map. This road is called the old Sofia Road, and was the principal thoroughfare towards Etropol before the chaussée was made. It was totally disused for a number of years, and was never more than a narrow neglected bridle-path. It was almost lost among the trees, and was gullied with the rain and grown over with bushes. A few days ago two battalions of the Pravbrajensky regiment began to work on the path, graded it somewhat, widened it nearly the whole extent, and cut steps in the ice in the steepest place up to the summit. A portion of the way was in full sight of the Turkish redoubts east of Araba-Konak. Therefore work could be undertaken only at night, and when the advance was made the path was so good that it was believed that cannon could be brought up with horses. When we arrived at the bivouac of the Dragoons part of the advance guard had already moved through the defile towards the west. The weather had grown cold again, and waiting in the snow was disagreeable. At this point the Princess Imperial section of the Red Cross Society had established its head-quarters and erected six kibitkas, which began already to be filled with men injured by falling on the ice. Nearly the whole day we stood there, and the column did not move a rod an hour.

I finally determined to make my way to the summit, and started off two hours before sunset. The way was completely blocked with artillery and infantry. The soldiers had made fires along the path and were cooking their suppers, and everybody seemed to be taking matters very easy. Hard climbing brought me to the first difficult place in the path, and here I discovered the cause of the delay. Four guns and their caissons were being hauled up by hand. The ropes were

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short, permitting not more than sixty men to take hold, and even this number worked with exasperating deliberation. It was soldiers of the line that were detailed to bring up the first cannon. They were small men, unused to such work, and after a long march from Plevna did not enter with any enthusiasm into the novel and exhausting labour.

General Rauch stood half-way up the first steep incline, encouraging the men to pull, and spurring up the officers. Long after dark I worked my way up from one crowd of soldiers to another. The intervals between the cannon grew longer and longer, and when I reached the first one I found the men all lying about resting as calmly as if it were not an important part of the plan of the enterprise that all the troops should get up the mountain before morning. The officers lay down and slept. The men made fires. Others scooped a hole in the snow, and were soon snoring peacefully. The choruses which had sounded along the path as the soldiers hauled the heavy caissons up, inch by inch, finally ceased altogether, and apparently everybody slept.

On the mountain, however, there was one man fully awake and alive to the importance of energetic efforts, and that man was General Rauch. The whole night long he climbed up and down that slippery path endeavouring to communicate some of his activity to the officers and men. The distance up the mountain was, perhaps, four miles, and the entire route was lined with soldiers sleeping on the ice or gathered around small fires in the snow. When they were awakened and ordered to move on, they never showed any impatience, but with their inimitable *sang froid* got up and walked a few paces and then slept again, dropping down like dead men.

Towards midnight General Gourko came up the path, followed by his staff. He could no longer endure the delay, and his sleepless energy would not permit him to remain inactive in the rear. A Cossack post was found on the summit of the watershed, and here the General and his staff lay down on the snow around two fires, which were kept low that the enemy might not notice them, and slept like the soldiers. The Pravbrajensky regiment had advanced into the village of

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Curiak, already for some days occupied by the Dragoon outposts, and with them part of the train of packhorses had descended in the early part of the night, so that there was little to eat and meagre comfort in the snow bivouac. Officers and soldiers lay around indiscriminately as near the fires as they could get, for the icy wind was blowing across the peak, and the snow was freezing hard.

The sun rose on a scene of wonderful picturesqueness and a landscape of serene beauty. Generals and aides-de-camp, some wrapped in bourkas and furs, some in overcoats alone, without additional covering, lay there in the snow huddled together about the fires. Cossacks and dragoons were already busy with their cooking, and hundreds of horses tied to the trees about the bivouac stamped impatiently in the snow. Southward lay the great plain of Sofia, its pure white face only broken by little dark lines where the villages were, and beyond, half veiled in dense clouds, were the mountains further south, and the great peak Vitos that towers over Sofia. Through the trees eastward was clearly visible the great bare peak near the Bilia-Konak Pass, and the lines of the Turkish works were drawn on the snow as plainly as pencil marks on white paper. General Rauch, always on foot, clambered up to the bivouac for a few moments' rest, and to consult with General Gourko, the motive power, and General Maglovsky, the soul of the enterprise. Then both General Rauch and General Gourko were off again to hasten the movements.

I must pause to say one word in unqualified praise of the General who has taken upon himself the awful responsibility of the passage of the Balkans in the dead of winter with the flower of the Russian Army, the choice Corps of the Guard. Never for a moment have I seen him lose his presence of mind, or show the slightest signal of discouragement. Always giving a personal example of energy and endurance, always exceeding in activity any of his officers, determined and courageous, he has the rare qualities which make him a thorough soldier and inspire the confidence of the men he leads. With all the weight of responsibility upon his shoulders he laboured physically more than his officers, and

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his enthusiam and energy, brought out clearly in this difficult passage of the mountains, are simply sublime.

Perhaps it is not altogether fair to criticize the work of the soldiers, whose task is never too easy, and whose life in the cold and snow has little except physical discomfort in it; but I cannot help believing that if the men had worked in reliefs, and had conceived the importance of haste, the entire column would have passed up the mountain in the time planned. To be sure allowance had not been made for the slippery state of the roads; but the active brains that had planned the movement had counted on an echo of their enthusiasm. At all events, by noon on the 26th only four four-pounders with caissons were placed on the watershed. News had come from the column on the right that the road was well nigh impassable, and nothing whatever was heard from Dondeville on the left; but the Guard had started up the mountains near Etropol, and worked with a will, singing and joking all the time during the long day we waited there chafing with impatience. The road down to Curiak being in sight of the Turkish positions was closed by patrols, and no movement permitted in that direction. Everywhere all over the mountain-top soldiers bivouacked in the snow in picturesque groups, cooking their food and drying their clothing, under little shelters constructed of snow and branches.

When the twilight came on we all started down the mountain, everybody on foot, for the path was so steep and slippery that no horse could carry a rider down. A snowstorm began before we had gone far and doubled the difficulty of the descent. Part of the way we slid down like so many schoolboys, and afterwards let ourselves down through the undergrowth, for the road was one solid sheet of ice. Two or three miles of this work brought us to the head of the valley, and we were over the Balkans, breathless with the exertion of the descent. We paused a moment, and shook hands in the darkness, and then pushed on to the village, where we slept under a roof as peacefully as if the Turks were twenty miles instead of one mile away. How the cannon came down this side it is almost impossible to tell,

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for the road was for a long distance only a gully made by the rain, and the incline was so steep and slippery that it was almost impossible to stand upon the road. However, the four-pounders were in the village at daybreak, and the regiment of the line filed through in the forenoon.

Curiak is a small village hidden away in a gorge, and a narrow valley winds through the hills to the plain beyond, a couple of hours' ride distant. At daybreak on the 27th the Circassian outposts were standing on a little hill scarcely a mile away, and we saw an officer with his staff come up and take a look, then gallop away. The Brigade of Kuban Cossacks was sent down the valley with one regiment of infantry to the left, and one up on the height to the right. There was a little popping in the valley. The Turks in a little rifle pit on the hill fired four rounds and then retired.

The enterprising Kubans pushed ahead and saw out on the plain a long transport train slowly moving towards Baba-Konak. They received orders to try and capture it. About three o'clock two squadrons—scarcely more than a hundred horsemen—dashed down into the plain and cut off half the train, more than 200 waggons laden with provisions and forage. The two squadrons of Turkish regular cavalry and Circassians retired immediately, when the Kubans came down; but finding they were not outnumbered, returned and gave battle. After a short sharp fight, in which ten Turks were killed and two Cossacks wounded, the waggons were left in the Russians' hands. The Cossacks cut the telegraph wires, the infantry took up positions on the hills near the plain, past the village of Potop, and the passage of the Balkans was an accomplished fact.

At the same time the column of Dondeville was seen descending the slopes near Mirkova like a great black serpent. A few prisoners were taken, who reported that the movement was a complete surprise, which seems incredible, considering the delays which occurred and the impossibility of finding routes which were not in plain sight of the enemy. However, yesterday the brigade of Cossacks raided up to the river Isker, surprised and routed various bands of Turkish Circassians, and cut off part of a large transport, escorted by two

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squadrons of cavalry and a battalion of infantry, gathered over 600 head of cattle and a large flock of sheep, and returned at night to Stolnik, having killed threescore of the enemy with a loss of three wounded.

Late last evening the column of General Wilhelminof began to debouch into this valley, the descent to Zilava having proved impracticable. These troops have undergone the most severe hardships, and report that the storm on the mountain was terrible. Soldiers who paused for a few moments became indistinguishable from masses of snow. Many strayed away. All suffered from want of food; and when they arrived here after an almost continuous march of five days, and for thirty-six hours without a halt, they were drenched and half frozen together.

The crossing has thus far cost very few lives, and it was accomplished, too, in the face of unusually severe weather, and to the complete surprise of the enemy. The Cossacks have played a most important part in this movement, and the history of their actions would make a most interesting letter. They bring in prisoners almost every day, half-naked and scarcely recognizable as human beings, Turkish-Circassians who have come into their lines believing them to be of the same army from the similarity of dress. Yesterday a blond young Kuban Cossack came riding in with a child of three years old slung in the mane of his horse as a cradle. The child was happily eating a morsel of hard bread, and had been thrown away by its mother from one of the transport waggons which escaped. The tenderness with which the Cossack handled the child, and the expression that his face wore as he fed the baby and gave it trinkets to play with, were most touching. When the child was taken from the horse to be given to the Red Cross attendants it cried lustily, and refused to be consoled.

The situation to-day promises a speedy advance. The chaussée is occupied in force, and a large number of battalions of infantry, with artillery in abundance, are in possession of Ilesnica. The soldiers of Wilhelminof's column who have reached here are half dead with hunger and fatigue, but find plenty of Indian corn in the village to eat. They started

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with five days' rations of hard bread, but most of them threw it away on the upward climb, so that now biscuits sell among them for a franc each.

There was a most peculiar effect of the column coming down through the snow. The sky and the mountains were all one colour, and the only spot on the blank white space was the winding black line slowly moving down, as if from the heavens. One by one the soldiers slid and scrambled down the steep slope, and the cannon were let down by ropes, wound about the trees or strong bushes. Once in the valley, after their five days of mountain climbing, they proceeded to make themselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, and, the houses in the villages being already overcrowded, the men constructed straw shelters in a few moments, so that all were under cover by sunset.

Now that the fatigues and dangers of the mountain climb are over, everybody is exhilirated, and the perils that menace us from the hands of the Turks seem insignificant in comparison with those of the passage in the snow and cold. As I recall the thirty hours I spent in the mountains without shelter, with scanty food—for my pack-horse, in company with many others, had gone astray—it seems a time so full of touching incidents and dramatic events that it recurs to my mind more as the phantasmagoria of a troubled dream than a recollection of real experience. The panorama of that mountain climb would contain more scenes of personal devotion and more dramas of human interest than most of the larger battles of the war. Every step presented a new picture. Gathered round a small fire at the foot of a large tree two or three Guardsmen would be relating the history of Gorny Dubnik, and with animated gestures illustrating how they dragged guns up the mountains near Etropol. The small audience of the soldiers of the line who had spent weary months in the Plevna trenches could only stand and wonder at the experience of the Guard, and, too cold to sleep, they passed the long night thus in exchanging stories of the war. Huddled up against the banked snow on the side of the pathway at every few paces were the soldiers who carried up the muskets of those who hauled the guns, and we stumbled over many lying in

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the path, shapeless bundles who could only be recognized as soldiers from the rifles which were stuck in the snow and lay scattered about on either side the track, the men having fallen fast asleep after futile efforts to make a fire out of the green wood.

When the soldiers dragging the cannon halted for a moment they lay down without letting go of the rope and slept on the ice, one lying upon the other. Their feet were wrapped in rags and skins, pointed capuchins covered their heads, almost hiding the faces, and most of them wore their shelter tent as a cloak. A file of them slowly stalking past in the darkness had a wondrously strange aspect. In the intense cold of the night their overcoats became inflexible, like sheets of iron. When the moon rose it lighted a scene of weird picturesqueness, figures and trees coming out dark against the mysterious background of snow, and the winding path being lost far up in the frosty haze. At intervals along the track were motionless groups of men, cannon, horses, and caissons; and little fires twinkled with a ruddy light all over the mountain side.

In the midst of these interesting scenes one could not grasp the full extent of the difficulties of the passage, for the attention was occupied with individual efforts. It is only when it is past that the full magnitude of the undertaking comes to be understood and appreciated. I am conscious that I have done scanty justice to the passage; but with the thermometer at zero, and no means of combining light and fire—for the houses have no glass, and the wood is all green, and one must choose between darkness with warmth and light with cold—there is enough to prevent concentration on any subject.

+ TASKOSEN, *January 1st (Midnight)*.—The impossibility of recrossing the mountains against the tide of troops in a single, narrow path, and the difficulty of communications between here and Sistova, a long four days' ride, compelled me to keep back my description of the actual passage of the Balkans until the highway was open, and my letter assumes naturally more or less the character of a diary.

We remained four days at Curiak waiting for the infantry and

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artillery to get over the mountains. Meantime the cavalry scoured the plain of Sofia, two regiments circling about as far eastward as Dolny-Kamarli, south of Araba-Konak, and every day prisoners and captured supplies were brought in. News came in that Lutikova was evacuated, and the latest reports from the positions in the Pass declared that the Turks had withdrawn several cannon from the earthwork on the summit of Greota, and were fortifying somewhere in their rear. They were found to have built three redoubts on the hill near Taskosen, just where the number 365,692 comes on the Austrian map, commanding the road at that point, and the first movement in force on this side of the mountain was to drive them from that position.

The attack was ordered for the morning of the 31st, and as this move was planned especially to give the lead to Dondeville, and so complete the chain about the Turks in the positions near the Pass, the tidings which reached us late in the evening before the attack, that Dondeville's column had failed to cross the mountains, and had retired to Etropol, was anything but encouraging. The failure to cross was bad enough, but he had been obliged to leave cannon on the summit, and the artillerymen who remained with the guns were all frozen, and buried in the driving snow, and among the infantry the losses were also serious, for there was no shelter on the cold mountain sides, and the snow made a bivouac there impossible. So it was with a certain earnestness of resolution that we went forward through the narrow little valley in the grey light of the early dawn.

The valley was crowded with reserves, and the artillery was struggling along the icy road. We rode to the eastward across the mountains until we came out upon a height near Taskosen, and there halted to watch the movements, for below us lay the whole region in the neighbourhood of the Turkish positions spread out like a map. The valley and the mountain were covered with snow, the masses of pure white only broken by little dark spots of irregular shape, where villages stood, patches of forest on the slopes, scattered trees along the road, and the black straight lines of the Russian troops as they marched to attack the positions.

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Directly over the little village, on a sharp, rocky peak, was seen plainly the dark line of redoubts, and little camps with tents and huts, and lines of infantry filing down the mountains towards the village. Every man could be seen as plainly as black on white could be, both Turks and Russians, and we awaited the first gun with the same impatience as one watches for the curtain to rise in a theatre, for we were to be spectators of a drama of the most intense interest, where the action was real, and the performers in all earnest, and the stage a broad landscape where every object was as distinctly visible as if presented on a mimic stage.

The Russian forces were divided into four columns. The extreme right, commanded by General Kurloff, was to cross the road and flank position by advancing over the mountain near where the village of Malkocevo is situated. The next column, and in reality the main force, was to rest on the road, to demonstrate in front, and to turn the Turkish right flank near the village of Danskioi with five battalions, while another column was to cross the mountains between Danskioi and Gorny-Kamarli, and the force of Count Shouvaloff was to advance directly upon the rear of the enemy.

Shortly after daylight two batteries got in position within easy range of the redoubt, and began to work. General Rauch's column concentrated behind the hill to deploy right and left, and the sharpshooters stolidly climbed the hill where the redoubts were. We could see them plainly as they toiled slowly up among the rocks and bushes, and the Turkish riflemen as they stood there waiting just in front of their earthworks, two or three together. The great square, black masses of infantry, that stood just beyond the road, began to string out in long lines and advance, received by skirmishers, towards the Turkish left, while the two brigades of cavalry that were sent towards Dolny-Kamarli were moving along a thin straight line rapidly eastward.

All the forenoon the artillery was exchanging shots with the two Turkish batteries. Scattered musketry was heard, and all along in front the batteries from the hill in the rear of the Turks began to fire. Towards noon there was a brisk fusillade on the right. Shortly after it began came the news that

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General Mirkovitch was wounded there. The column had met with a stubborn resistance. The Turks in the rifle pits on the mountains were defending their left with determination. A caisson exploded in the Turkish battery over the village, giving the signal for ringing cheers that went up all along the line, and Rauch's troops, which were joining hands with Kurloff on their right, began to move up the hill between the batteries and the village, and soon were on the crest. The order was given then to attack about two o'clock, and just as they went forward down the slope towards the village, spreading out all over the field, there came on a fog, so that we could see only indistinctly how they rushed into the town. But as one scattered group went in, the whole hillside beyond was covered with Turks running away in every direction. The enemy's batteries ceased firing from the hill, and in a few moments the musketry dropped away into a few straggling shots.

We were in the village before four o'clock. There were a few stray shots falling into the town, and several men were wounded there, for the Turks were still resisting stoutly at the Karaula, half a mile up the road; but the position was evacuated, and only the blood-stained powder-blackened snow, and a score or two of dead men showed where the fight had been so hot. In the village were herded hundreds of prisoners. Soldiers were ransacking every nook and corner for plunder. Infantrymen were frisking about on captured horses, and there was the ghastly spectacle of dead and wounded on every side. But the worst was not in the streets, for many houses in the village were filled with dead. There was a station of the British National Society of the Red Cross here, and several hospitals, and we found dead and alive lying together as in the charnel houses of Plevna.

At dark the fight ceased. A thousand fires twinkled all over the white slopes, and we slept in the houses where fires lighted by the Turks were still burning. The loss in killed and wounded amounted to about 300; but it was a victory cheaply gained, for though the key of the position, the mountain on their left, covering their retreat from Baba-

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Konak by the road towards Slatica, was still held by the enemy, pickets pushed up the road to the Karula. The Turks had resisted with great valour, for they were outnumbered three to one. Their communications with Sofia had been cut four days; they had seen the Russians pouring over into the valley, and dragging their artillery by paths which were believed to be impassable; they knew their only hope of retreat from Baba-Konak was by the Slatica road, and they held their ground like heroes.

One of the first things picked up in the village was a despatch from Baker Pacha, who commanded there, to Chakir Pacha at Araba-Konak, dated the same day, telling how eighteen battalions of Russians had descended the mountains and twelve were attacking him, and that he was surrounded by a circle of fire. General Gourko did not sleep until he had prepared for the probable retreat of the forces from Baba-Konak by sending all the cavalry at his disposal to Petricevo, for Dondeville was to make the crossing to Slatica with General Brock's column, and thus remedy in part his failure to cross to Mirkova.

New Year's morning was hazy and mild, and as the General and his staff rode up the road at daybreak the mountain tops were all hidden from view. With his ordinary escort of a score or two, some dragomans, and a few Cossacks, the General rode slowly on, passed the pickets at the Karula, and down the hill towards the triangular valley south of Baba-Konak. Half-a-dozen Cossacks galloped down the road and divided, part following the road towards Araba-Konak, part towards Slatica. There was perfect quiet, and every one in the small group of horsemen seemed to feel the uncertainty of the imminent future, for there was little conversation, and we went on, passing a dead man here and there, tracing the paths by which the wounded had dragged themselves to the rear, and those who had fought at Taskosen the day before had hastily retreated. No reconnaissance had been made towards Baba-Konak; in fact, we were making the reconnaissance then, and General Gourko was riding along as usual at the head of his staff, with only a handful of his escort a short distance ahead of him. A dozen prisoners were soon brought

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back, and one or two gathered in by the Cossacks came straggling along the road.

Just beyond the place where the road divides, the route towards Baba-Konak comes out upon a little knoll, whence the whole of the triangular valley is visible. Here we halted and anxiously looked. Near the houses at Araba-Konak were several Turkish cannons, and a dozen Cossacks were galloping towards them. All along the further side of the valley were men running through the snow. The Slatica road was trodden hard. Cavalry had passed that way, and much infantry; so it was not surprising to see in the village of Dolny-Kamerli, whither a number of waggons were hurrying, the unmistakable black masses of infantry filling the streets. Cossacks of the escort who went in that direction, wheeled and crossed the fields to the left. Those who went towards Araba-Konak, rushed off after the flying stragglers, and one by one headed them in. It was an exciting chase, for the horses could not go fast through the deep snow, and the fugitives scampered away until fairly run down, though some knelt and threw up their hands whilst the Cossacks were yet a long distance away. Looking at this we almost forgot the troops of the Slatica road, and when we looked again they began to crawl up the hill-side behind the town, clustered like ants altogether at the foot of the hill, and then, quite like these insects, filling up and struggling along on either side of the moving masses. Six, seven, eight tabors we counted, and the rest were so huddled together that it was impossible to separate them into battalions. Artillery had been ordered up. We saw our infantry advancing along the mountain, which had been so vigorously defended the day before, and then form on the road below.

As the great black masses stretched out and filled the road that zigzagged up the hill, we could see that there were from 10,000 to 15,000 of them, and that they were moving away in a great hurry. They hastily threw up trenches on the summit of the hill, and by noon scarcely a Turk was visible. Two guns were quickly got up, and there was some shelling and a little musketry; but they had two hours' start, and the pursuit went on over the hills. Before they were out of

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sight the thinnest possible black line was observed winding down the White Mountain flank beyond, and above Araba-Konak. They halted, and then the small knot of horsemen, and the skirmishers in front of them, still lower down, hastened up to the main body, which speedily formed. Then for a few moments we doubted whether they were not the Turks, from the positions there, and the battery of nine-pounders which had just unlimbered where we stood, seemed to have arrived in the nick of time, when the soldiers gave a hearty hurrah, and the cheer was faintly re-echoed away across on the mountain, and we saw the line descend once more, and we knew they were ours.

At this moment General Gourko turned around and said earnestly, "Now we can say, in all conscience, that we have crossed the Balkans, in every phase of the undertaking," and he shook hands warmly with every one, congratulating those who counted this as their second passage.

Surely there was cause for felicitation, for the fight had lasted from Christmas until New Year's day, first, with the forces of nature, which were resisted with the wonderful pluck and patient endurance of the Russian soldier, and then with the enemy, who were driven from their chosen positions. A few moments later the column from the mountains filed into the valley, and the soldiers distributed the rice, bread, and salt found in the Turkish camp, in less time than I write it, for they had been on short rations for days. Near Araba-Konak was a fine large tent of the Red Cross Society, and almost the first man I met was the chief doctor of the British National Society, Dr. Leslie, who had come from the village of Strigli to ask for a guard from General Gourko, because he with six other doctors were at work on the Turkish wounded in the village, and it was deserted by the Turks and not yet occupied by the Russians. Besides those seven doctors the correspondent of the *Illustrated London News* was also there. The guard was promptly furnished, and the last I heard of the doctors was that they were still with the wounded there. The Turkish surgeons all left with the troops.

While we were welcoming the column from the mountains the

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little detachment of General Wilhelminof, which had taken up position at Gorny Bugaroff, was attacked by eight battalions of Turks, who came out from Sofia. The fight lasted several hours, and then the Turks made an attempt to turn the flank and advanced on the works in column. The Russians waited until they were within a few paces, and first gave them a volley and then charged upon them, scattering them in the twinkling of an eye, and captured with the prisoners one battle flag.

The details of the losses in General Dondeville's column have reached us. During the terrible days of exposure on the mountain, 810 men were placed *hors de combat*, of which number twelve were officers. Seventy-nine men were frozen to death. Thus the passage of the Balkans cost altogether about 1,200 men.

Up to the present moment of writing, we hear meagre news of the pursuit of the column of Turks. The deep snow prevents rapid movements of cavalry, which service, by the way, is much too feeble in this army, and the infantry halted towards night, for the men were too exhausted to keep up the pursuit. There is little doubt, therefore, that the Turks will escape with their artillery. The attack on Sofia will be made before this despatch reaches the Danube, and there is little doubt of the result, for there are few troops there. The principal defences of the town, beside the old forts, are three redoubts between the road and Slatica.

With this letter I send off my only remaining servant, the storm and cold having blocked for many days all my communications, but after the passage of the mountains, it seems as if one could have no further difficulties to contend with.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE OCCUPATION OF SOFIA.

General Gourko's Congratulations.—The Small Tin Box.—The Craving for Sweets.—Prisoners and Captured Provisions.—The Hospital Tent of the British National Society.—Examination of the Captured Works.—Retrospect of the Movement.—The Turks Completely Surprised.—Stripping of the Dead by the Bulgarians.—A Little Plevna.—The Battle Field of Gorny Bugarof.—The Peasants of the Valley.—News from Sofia.—Authority of General Gourko over his Troops.—The Fez and the Hat.—Neglect of the Wounded.—Apathy of the Russians.—Lady Strangford's Benevolent Labours.—Entry into Sofia.—Condition of the Town.—Feeling of the People.—An Old Turk.—Retrospect of Recent Fighting.—Heavy Losses of the Turks.—Intrepidity of General Gourko.—Public Reception of the Victors.—Orderly Conduct of the Russian Soldiers.—Flight of the Turkish Inhabitants.—Attempt by Bashi-Bazouks to Fire the Town.—Occupation of Ichtiman.—Operations of the Servian Army.—Capture of Pirot by General Horvatovitch.—An Ambuscade.

In the following letter the narrative of General Gourko's advance is continued. It will be seen that after the fall of Plevna, or at least after the resumption by the Russians of those active operations that had been temporarily hindered by the stormy weather, the resistance in the Etropol Balkans was but feebly sustained, and it soon became evident that the shattered strength of the Turkish armies was destined to be concentrated for the defence of the capital, the country west of Adrianople being practically abandoned to the victorious enemy.

+ Headquarters of General Gourko, Sofia, *January 5th*.—It was the supreme moment of the campaign when on New Year's morning General Gourko turned to his suite and congratulated the officers on the success of the passage of the Balkans.

We stood there on a little knoll near the point where a branch of the Sofia road turns eastward towards Slatica, ankle deep in the snow, but forgetting the cold in the excitement of watch-

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ing the cavalrymen hunt down the fugitives, and in the anxiety about the situation at the Pass, for we had no indications whether the enemy had yet retired from the positions there, or was about to make a final stand on the watershed. When at last we saw a little thin black line winding down the road out of the clouds that hid the summit of the pass, we we knew it was the advanced guard of the troops who had been holding the Russian entrenchments there, and we all felt as if the hardships of life in the mountains, the terrible sufferings of the soldiers, our own share in the exposure and toil, and the lack of food and simple comforts of camp life, were once for all time ended. This business had been growing daily more tedious, and up to Christmas morning, when we started away from Orkanieh to cross the range, we had been hourly losing patience, and had come to receive the news of so many soldiers frozen to death at the outposts, so many others frost-bitten and sent back to the hospitals, with something like the same feeling with which one sees brave men's lives thrown away in battle while standing under a hot fire waiting for supports. Here, however, we knew that there was no mistake made, that it was simply necessary to hold the positions until the reinforcements arrived to swell the force to sufficient size to turn the enemy's line, without being obliged to attack it in front.

I shall always remember, as I think all present will, the tone with which General Gourko said, "Now we can say, in all conscience, that we have crossed the Balkans in every phase of the undertaking." There were many there who contrasted mentally the heat of the summer passage and the cold of the winter campaign, the fresh green landscapes, and the snow-covered bleak mountain sides before us, the succession of pleasant picnics then, and the continual recurrence of uncomfortable nights and cheerless days in Bulgarian villages, where a leaky roof and windowless room were the best, shelter we could expect to find. General Gourko called for his orderly, who presented a small tin box. Expecting to see either some official seal brought forth, or perhaps decorations for the officers, I watched his movements with some interest. Instead of crosses, he took out three pieces of chocolate, and

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calling Generals Rauch and Naglovsky, he gave them each a bit; also Major Liegnitz, the Prussian military attaché, received his share.

This little incident illustrates much plainer than columns of descriptive matter would do, the condition in which we found ourselves after the week among the mountains, when salt was worth its weight in gold, when bread was a luxury, and when sugar and such articles as chocolate were not to be dreamed of. The great question on every side had been for days "Have you any bread?" And I never heard any one confess that he had. We used to stow away a crust of heavy bread made of corn meal and take it out and gnaw at it in secret. There was plenty of tea and it was passed around without sugar. Every one would take his glass and drink it almost like medicine, for we had all cultivated a very sweet tooth ever since we crossed the Danube. Some more provident than the rest would be seen to slyly take out a lump of sugar about the colour of the ground and nibble it while drinking their portion of tea. It was a famine, not serious for us, it is true, but which threatened serious misfortune for the soldiers if communications were not speedily opened.

The ridiculous side of the question among the officers was so prominent that in the midst of real deprivation we forgot our wants. To see a colonel riding along with a stick strung with bits of roasted meat in his sword hand, offering it to the generals as he passed, excited great merriment, while every one would have been glad to have got hold of part of the prize. The day of the affair at Taskosen we slaughtered an ox on the little hill where General Gourko and his staff watched the battle, and every one set to work roasting bits of the smoking flesh on sharpened sticks. We had had no breakfast, and as our appetites were sharpened by a quick ride of several miles in the frosty air, these tit-bits were relished even without salt, of which there was not enough in the whole party to drop on a bird's tail. So when General Gourko regaled his officers with small bits of chocolate, judging from my own feelings at the time, it appeared to be about the most appropriate celebration of the event that, under the circumstances, one could imagine. But lest my letter become an enumeration of repasts

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in one form or another, for I observe it is rapidly taking that character, I will not continue detailing the history of our cuisine. One may be excused for alluding to it in view of the fact that when it is a struggle to get anything to eat, one's meals mark important events in each day; and considering also how much one's judgment is warped, his appreciation directed, and even changed, by such small matters as failure to arrive at dinner-time, or lack of forage for one's horse, I may offer this excuse for mixing up food and fighting, strategy and supplies, in rather a promiscuous manner.

We had a very hearty congratulation all around that morning as we stood in the snow, although the felicitations were interrupted for a moment by the inexplicable movement of the column we saw descending the mountain; for we saw the advance guard suddenly turn and hurry up to the main body, and the troops make formation near the summit of the pass, and we were not sure that it was not after all the enemy's force coming down from the positions, until an officer was sent up to find out, and they began to descend again. Cavalrymen kept bringing in reports of how many prisoners they had taken. One tall young fellow came up, saluted, and said quite simply, as if he were detailing so many bales of goods, "I have taken twenty-three Turks, sixteen oxen, two pair of buffaloes, and four sheep." Another one came up dragging along a Turk by the arm who refused to give up his gun. He was slightly wounded, and when he was compelled to throw down the weapon remarked with some energy, "Well, when my wound is healed I shall take my rifle and rejoin my battalion." The poor fellow had only one idea, and that was to touch elbows with his comrades in the ranks; he didn't conceive that he was a prisoner.

The lively little chase in the valley still went on. The Cossacks galloped slowly through the snow, leading in one after another of the fugitives, who ran with all their strength until the pursuers were right upon their heels, and then they stopped; the Cossacks circled around the prisoners once, and then hastened off after the rest. The camps by the roadside were now being plundered, rice, beans, and salt were speedily distributed, and a tent full of warm clothing made a hundred soldiers

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happy. Three miles across the valley, at the little village of Dolny-Kamarli, the Turkish army was standing in a great black cluster, and just as the Russians began to file along the mountains east of Taskosen the battalions crawled slowly up the hill, and soon the whole line of the road was black with a solid column of Turks hurrying up the zigzag with thousands of stragglers climbing up on either side of the road. The column marched with great rapidity, and before the Russians occupied the village the rear battalion had disappeared behind the crest of the hill, and a little earthwork had sprung up like magic on the summit. There was a little popping in the village, and the two pieces of cannon which had dashed along the road sent a shell or two after the retreating column, but the pursuit was not very lively.

At Araba-Konak we found the great hospital tent of the British National Society, and a small store of rice, salt, and hard bread, and along the road were piled thousands of boxes of ammunition of all kinds, over five million rounds of small arm ammunition among the lot.

The General visited the Turkish positions on Mount Shandarnik, having some curiosity to examine the fortifications which we had looked at so long from below. The redoubts on the east of the road numbered eleven in all, and three defended the pass on the west. All of these works were as neat and trim as a gentleman's garden, and they were as cosy as children's play-houses. Nine cannon were found in the works, and the reason why they were left was apparent. The whole distance behind the line of fortifications was a succession of precipices and impassable ravines, and the only approach to the works on the highest summit was by the whole length of the line, consequently when they withdrew from the works they were obliged to move their artillery along the whole line to the road. A large force of Russian Volunteers attacked the works about the time the retreat was made, and the Turks were obliged to make a show against them, which they did effectually. But the Russian batteries, which had been at work all day, poured in such a shower of projectiles that the Turks found themselves obliged to leave the cannon, because to bring them down the whole line of works exposed a long

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distance to the terrible fire, was sure destruction to men and horses. The fortifications, while occupying impregnable positions, had no line of retreat except by the road.

A few paces behind the redoubts, on the west of the pass, there is a sharp declivity impossible to scale, and all the soldiers who went into the works were exposed to the Russian fire. This explained the reason of their constant exposure, which had long been a problem to the Russians. Another weakness of this position was the absence of any depôt of stores near. The troops were fed from day to day by transport trains from Sofia, and when the road was cut there was no alternative but retreat. It seems inexplicable that the Turks have not studied the country sufficient to be aware of the existence of practicable roads on either side of the pass, but such is the case. The first step the Russians took was to study accurately the range in front of them, and by comparing and classifying the information of a great many natives, they succeeded in getting an approximately true idea of the topography of the mountains, and every officer who made a reconnaissance was provided with a map which, while it did not perhaps indicate the exact conformation of the ground, was sufficiently right in distances, and he went ahead sure of his path.

To Prince Tzereteleff, who has already in the first passage gained a great reputation for his services, the work of finding paths across the range here was entrusted, and in a few days he found half a dozen routes, any of which could be used. The last path explored, and by much the easiest, crosses the range just west of Shandarnik, and comes out at Mirkovo. Unfortunately, this was not discovered until too late to make use of it, for the road over the watershed to Curiak was already worked by two battalions of the Praobrajensky regiment, and the order had been given for the main column to cross that way. The Russian maps are all of them inexact, but the officers supply the deficiencies by diligent and enterprising study of the country as they advance, and know the mountains they are to pass through much better than the Turks do, who have had all the opportunities of studying them. So the positions at the Baba-Konak Pass were turned

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by four separate columns. Dondeville's detachment crossed the range, and would have fulfilled its rôle if the severe storm had not driven it back to Etropol with the fearful loss of nearly 1,000 men *hors de combat*. A very small force of Turks at either of those roads would have delayed and perhaps effectually prevented the passage. The movements were made so slowly that it seemed quite incredible that the Turks did not have an idea of what was going on, but all the prisoners agreed that it was a complete surprise, and I am told that Baker Pacha was the only Turkish officer who foretold the move.

We rode back to Taskosen the evening after the retreat, passing a long string of wounded Turks, slowly crawling along the road towards the sharp little rise that separates the triangular valley from the village where head-quarters were. They needed no guard, for they were only too anxious to reach the village, where they could find shelter for the night with the other prisoners. I know the fate of most of this procession of miserable sufferers, for the next day I came over the road again, and the majority of them lay dead in the route where they had fallen in the night, struggling up the hill. I had the satisfaction of whipping away a few Bulgarians who were stripping them. The same scoundrels who refused the day before to help the wounded to reach their destination were the first ones to come back and despoil those who died because they were not assisted to climb the hill. Taskosen was a little Plevna; dead men lay on all sides; the hospital of the Red Crescent there, which might have been once well arranged and neat, was in a most filthy condition, and dead and dying were side by side in a dark, foul-smelling barn, and several rooms in the village were full of corpses.

The next morning General Gourko moved his head-quarters to Gorny Bugarof, the village where, on the preceding day, there had been a very sharp fight. We were an hour on the road when an officer came galloping up to overtake us with the surprising information that Baker Pacha was wounded and a prisoner at Strigli. As Dr. Leslie, of the British National Aid Society, had visited us the day before and had made no mention of this, I did not credit the story very

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much; but when the officer, who was about to start for headquarters, was told to make this report to the Grand Duke, I thought it was time to investigate the matter, and consequently turned round and rode away towards Strigli. In a few moments Prince Tzereteleff overtook me, having been sent by General Gourko to see the prisoner, and we kept company. Prince Oldenburg, who had commanded the positions of Generals Rauch and Dondeville during the passage, was quartered with a division in the village, and readily gave us permission to visit the Englishmen. In a little house distinguished by the Red Crescent flag we found Colonel Baker, Drs. Leslie, Kirkpatrick, Gooderich, and Denton, with their storekeeper, Mr. Vitalis, and Mr. Joseph Bell, of the *Illustrated London News*.

Prince Oldenburg had already told us that it was not Baker Pacha who was a prisoner, so we were not surprised to find that the gentleman we had come to see was the chief of the Turkish gendarmes, who, being ill with dysentery, was unable to move. Colonel Baker received us with cordiality, and we had a pleasant chat on the situation. He hoped to be moved in a few days, and it was believed that Dr. Leslie would be permitted to accompany him to Bucharest. The doctors were well quartered, their horses were stabled, and for all I could see they were very comfortable. In their lodgings I found more luxury than I had met since Bucharest, and I should have been only too willing to cast in my lot with them as far as personal comfort was concerned. The one little thorn in the flesh was that they were not altogether sure what would be done with them, for no one seemed to know whether they would be treated as prisoners or not, whether they would be sent into Russia, or into the Turkish lines. This latter is a question which I am still unable to answer. I only know that Colonel Baker is the sole prisoner among them. To seat myself in a warm comfortable room with signs of abundant stores all about, and to find a type of face that was grateful to my eyes, an accent that was pleasant to my ears, was an inexpressible delight after weeks of squalor, of privation and hardship, and it was nearly dark before we

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could make up our minds to start away with our tired horses on the thirty mile ride.

At sunset it began to freeze, and when we got past Taskosen the road was one sheet of ice, for the troops had marched over it while the snow was soft, and our horses skated along threatening to fall at every moment. A single post of Cossacks were the only live human beings we met on the long route, and a longer road I never travelled. A chill mist hid the mountains and settled freezing on ourselves and horses. Stumbling, slipping, shuffling along the smooth road, we slowly advanced, passing on the left and right the dim glare of bivouacs, without seeing a single fire until within a half mile of Gorny Bugarof, when we saw on the hill-side a bivouac lighted by hundreds of large fires, and we made for the point. All along the road near the village were stark corpses, with great sabre cuts on their heads, tumbled into ditches, or lying stiff across the path. The bivouac was on the hill-side near the village, and as we rode through it there came out against the sky to meet us a line of men carrying the dead of the day before, to bury them in the cornfields on the slope. Lighted by the ruddy reflections from the fires, in distinct outline against the sky, moving along slowly, and without a sound, this was rather a weird welcome to the village after our ride; but we tumbled into a cellar half filled with hay, where a bright fire was blazing in an open fireplace, and forgot in an instant Turk and Russian, living and dead. Shelter is a necessity in weather such as we have been having for a month, and with the thermometer below zero, one soon discovers that it is best not to be too proud, but to put up with whatever one can find. There is always a lingering sensation of disgust at being forced to sleep on the straw where men lay dead a few hours before. Then, too, it is not agreeable to feel that in the walls, the floor, in the straw is lurking the fever that this state of filth must generate, and perhaps all sorts of contagious diseases. However, fatigue and want of sleep dull all senses, and oblivion is most welcome.

The battle-field near Gorny Bugarof is covered as thickly with

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dead as any I have seen in the war. The village lies in a shallow valley near the edge of the level plain that stretches away uninterruptedly towards Sofia. The hills about the village are low, and the rise on all sides is gentle and unbroken by ravines or cover of any kind; the stalks of Indian corn sticking out of the snow show that the land was cultivated, but not a hedge or ditch interrupts the smooth blank surface of the plain. No, not blank, for everywhere, scattered thickly over the snow, are black spots all along the hill-side, in groups near the line of shallow rifle pits on the top of the rise west of the town, clustered by dozens in the cornfields at the foot of the first slope, and straggling away down to the road nearly a mile away. It is early morning, and coming towards the battle-field like a flock of vultures, impelled by similar instincts, no more worthy the respect and consideration of civilized men than these foul birds, are crowds of Bulgarians, every man with a stick and a bag. Two or three of them assemble around a corpse; they poke it with their sticks; they pry over the rigid thing, half afraid to touch it; but a red sash is too much for one of them, and he seizes it and drags it from the dead man's waist. Another grabs the uniform jacket, and snatches the sleeves from the stiff arms as if he were afraid the dead man would harm him. Now they grow bolder and actually wrangle and shove each other about, for one of them wants the trousers, and a second ruffian disputes the prize with him.

While I am looking at this scene, half making up my mind to leave fresh subjects for spoliation on the battle-field alongside the dead of two days before, a soldier comes along and spits on the group in disgust. I feel that this is an insult that they can understand, and leave them to continue their robbery in another part of the field, for they have hurried away after the soldier has passed. In a few moments the battle-field swarms with these human vultures, and I sit hopelessly, helplessly on my horse, and watch them strip entirely naked, underclothing and all, the brave fellows who fell within two horses' lengths of those rifle-pits. Now I understand why those corpses in the snow on Shandarnik were naked; now for the first time I see what I have always

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heard of the Bulgarians, that they rob the dead after a battle, and have no scruples about it either.

The peasants in the valley here are a pretty hard-looking set at the best. They are finely developed physically, with rather gross features, and rarely anything attractive in their type. They generally shave their heads, leaving a long scalp-lock like the Chinese or the American Indians, and dress in a short loose jacket and tight trowsers, like the Japanese. They are quite a different type from the peasants about Tirnova, much more brutal in their manners, and without anything like affection for family or friends, as far as I have seen them during my short stay here, and what experience I have had with them in money matters has made me believe there is little honesty among them. In the mountains, at Etropol, at Orkanieh, I met numbers of really superior caste among the peasants. This side of the range I have yet to find one above the average, which is low enough without any question. I would not pretend to make any general statements about the race, although I have been in contact with them without intermission since the first crossing of the Danube at Matchin, for I find them quite different in many traits of character in different regions, the native of the mountains being quite another man from the peasant of the plain, and those on the Tirnova side as much superior to those about Orkanieh as human beings, as can be imagined. I only state the facts which have come under my observation without discussing the reasons for the brutality and sordidness of this people, or such of them as I have met. The argument of those very charitably inclined towards the Bulgarians is that they strip the dead because they believe they are only taking back what has been stolen from them. The same argument would apply to the cases where the men beat their sick mothers because they groan; it is only paying back the cuffs they received in childhood.

From the tracks in the snow on the battle-field at Gorny Bugarof I could draw a plan of the fight and estimate the numbers engaged. The Russian boot-tracks are quite different from the heelless foot-prints of the Turks, and it was easy to follow the movements of both sides, even to trace

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just where the charge was made, where the bayonets were plied, and where the wounded were gathered up. It was a mild misty morning when I rode over the battle-field, and the air was so thick that the mosques of Sofia were invisible. Accompanying General Gourko, who made a personal reconnaissance away round to the north of the town, we came within a mile of the outlying houses. Very little movement was observable near the town, but the camps near the earthworks on the hill to the east were black with soldiers, the fortifications were manned, and there was no sign of evacuation. The attack, which was planned for the next day, had been postponed because the troops had not come up for the column which was to advance from the north-west with a detachment on the west of the city, and that afternoon, the 3rd of January, we moved our quarters again to a large farmhouse, said to be the property of a rich Turk, near the covered bridge across the Isker, where the skirmish had been the day I went to Strigli. Turkeys, geese, chickens, and live stock abounded, and we had our first feast since the day before Christmas, and prepared to pass thirty-six hours in quiet there.

Everybody was anxious to get into Sofia, and we did not relish the forced pause, first because we expected to have a hard fight, and to lose several thousand men, and it was better to have it over than to sit and think about it; and second, we had been living from hand to mouth for so long that we were impatient to have a change. The cry was in everybody's mouth, "Give us sugar!" and the universal remark which passed around to cheer the despondent and to quiet the impatient was, "We'll get sugar in Sofia." Without exaggeration, I believe that this was uppermost for the moment in the minds of the majority of the officers. Naturally enough too, for with the retreat of Chakir Pacha, the responsibility seemed light, and the attention reverted to the personal privations again, and of all privations the lack of sugar was the most keenly felt. Even salt might be spared, but sugar never. I had been scribbling on my letters in the brief and infrequent intervals of quiet which are granted to any one who accompanies General Gourko, for he rarely is out of the

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saddle in the daytime. I had been sitting in the snow, with the thermometer below zero. I had been writing by firelight in rooms crowded with a gossiping, laughing, noisy party, singeing my hair trying to get the flicker from the flame of green wood in the bivouac on the paper, to make the pencil marks visible. I had been, in fact, writing under every form of discomfort with my best table the seat of the saddle, sprawled on the snow or on the floor; so it was with considerable relief that I found a little fireplace in an open hall, and for the first time in two weeks sat down on a chair and prepared to write.

While thawing my ink a Cossack came trotting into the court and announced that Sofia was evacuated. No one believed it, and I put the date on the sheet, but did not get any further before an officer came with the news that General Rauch's column was entering the city. It was then nearly two o'clock in the afternoon, and the advance guard had been in the town since ten, and we had had no word of it although we were not over an hour's ride away. We saddled and started on a quick trot, and passed the covered bridge just after the last detachment of General Rauch's column had gone over it. From here to the city the road was a solid column of infantry marching slowly along with unfurled flags, stepping to the time of the ringing songs of the platoons in front of each battalion. They were not quite as trim as when they crossed the Sistova Bridge, their caps were warped out of shape, their overcoats occasionally tattered and burned, and their faces and hands brown and roughened with the constant exposure, but they were as tidy as could be expected, and marched with a swing and regularity that was refreshing to see after the forced disorder of the mountain marches. A total stranger could not have failed to notice how perfectly General Gourko had his troops in hand, for the tone in which they answered his customary salutation, the expression of the individual faces as he passed, and the way in which they received the caution not to pillage in the city, were proof of this. He has a thrilling sternness in his voice when he chooses, and he gives his orders sometimes with a tone that is almost terrible in its severity. And I never heard him give

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an order with more earnestness than the charge to the soldiers not to dare to touch a single article in the town, and they had understood even before he shook his finger at them that plundering was not to be permitted.

The fact is that when we came into the place there was perfect quiet, a large patrol was in the streets even before the troops halted, and all pillage was stopped. The entrance of General Gourko was rather a tame affair compared with his entry into Tirnova, for example, and there was not enough enthusiasm among the people to raise a cheer or a good round of applause. It was rather a cold afternoon and the citizens were shivering about, many of them thinly dressed, for all who could had discarded their waving garments of the Turkish cut and put on odd pieces of European dress. Full suits of light summer stuffs were not uncommon, and their attempts to Europeanize themselves were almost pitiable. The fez, however, was the most common head-gear. They had no other covering for the heads, the most of them, and they even forgot to take these off when the general passed. They couldn't, of course, learn in a half-day that it was the custom of their deliverers to doff the hat, when they had been brought up all their lives accustomed to see the fez worn on all occasions, and the lesson was taught them in rather a rude way sometimes. The soldiers considered that the fez indicated the Turks, and often threw them to the ground, but I couldn't excuse the action of some officers who must have been aware that this article of clothing has as little significance in the mixed population of the Turkish cities as the rosary that is never out of the hands of the majority of the people in the Levant. The next day there were hats enough of all shapes and all dates to satisfy the most unreasonable of the fez-haters, and it was rather a ludicrous sight to see a full Turkish costume surmounted by a silk hat of date '50 or a fur cloak and a straw hat, worn by the same person. The style is gradually reverting again, however, to that of the period of the Turkish occupation, and the fez, which on the first afternoon was as provoking to the soldiers as a red rag to a bull, can now be worn without danger of insult.

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The retreating troops did not get out of the city until three o'clock in the morning of the day General Gourko entered, and the battalions formed in the streets and began to march away at seven o'clock in the evening before the waggon trains had been moving off. For forty-eight hours the wounded, or such of them as could walk, were ordered away by Kirkor Bey, the medical director of the town on the 3rd, and five or six thousand of them limped away, urged on by fear of the Russians. Of their fate there is little doubt, although we have had no news of them. Like the straggling wounded at Taskosen, the majority of them will die from cold and hunger, and the whole route of retreat is in all probability paved with their corpses before this. From what I can judge from the hospitals here they were once very well arranged, perfectly clean and comfortable. There are between seventy and eighty houses in the town, which were used as hospitals, the konak, the mosques, schoolhouses, and other public buildings among the number.

In these buildings the patients were all on beds raised eighteen inches from the floor, the mattresses are well made and still in good condition, and the abundance of bedding and necessary furniture of every kind shows that they were arranged with great care. But these hospitals, when General Gourko visited them, were great tombs for dead and living, filthy to the last degree, with an atmosphere so heavy with horrible and disgusting odours, that it seemed as if it was impossible for human beings to live there. The dead outnumbered the living in many wards. Some had been murdered by the Bulgarians, probably because they had not strength enough to resist being robbed, for the survivors in the deserted wards state that the Bulgarians made a tour of robbery among them, which the loss of their money tends to prove, and the action of the Bulgarian attendants in Lady Strangford's Hospital, who first plundered the patients and then ran away and deserted them in the night, makes it seem probable. Certain it is that many Turks were murdered, if any reliance is to be placed on the word of the doctors, American, English, and Turkish, who attended them; some died from sheer fright, and many were unable to support life on the

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meagre rations that were served to them during the Russian occupation, for when the Turks stopped issuing rations, there was no one to step in and fill the interim, and the helpless were the sufferers.

The Konak was the most horrible of the whole list of pest-houses. Dead men in every attitude lay all over the floor of the halls, on the stairs, in the closets, in the passage ways, and on the beds in the wards. The filth of days was on the floors. From the undressed wounds came a most fearful sickening stench—it was in fact exactly a parallel with the similar hospitals at Plevna after the surrender. I can account for this awful state of the wounded only by believing what is asserted by the Europeans, that though the hospitals were methodically arranged and well attended, the doctors were ignorant and careless, and, with all their assistants and nurses, took the first opportunity of running away. Two days of neglect would be sufficient to produce the effect we witnessed. When we visited these places there was rarely an attendant to be seen. Some had probably come back since the first troops entered the town, a few had stayed at their posts through the whole; but the number was so small that they could not begin to care for one in ten of their patients, and they died like sheep. This is not a subject that I care to linger over long, for it is becoming monotonous to chronicle instance after instance of neglected wounded, of long unburied dead, and of pestilential hospitals; but it is such a prominent feature of this war, the inhuman treatment of the wounded and the contempt of the dead, that one is forced to describe it in order to do justice to the situation.

There was an interim of three days between the time when the Turks ceased issuing rations to the wounded and the Russians began giving out food to their prisoners. I believe there is no valid excuse for this neglect to provide food for the wounded, for there were plenty of stores captured in the town, and numbers of ovens, which are only beginning work at the date of this letter. If I may criticize broadly the course of the Russians here and at Plevna, I may say that they seemed so dazed by the novelty of their situation as victors in possession of these cities that they did not get fully awake

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to their duties towards their prisoners or comprehend clearly the situation; in a word, they did not appreciate the fact that they were responsible for the support of the men who had passed into their hands as captives, until three or four days after the surrender. I firmly believe that if they had recaptured their own wounded they would have acted no more promptly. More than once have I seen them make a distinction in favour of wounded Turks when their own soldiers needed the assistance quite as much. I can conscientiously charge them only with a crime of omission, and it is not in the national character to do any different from what they have done. They put off digging trenches on a newly-taken position until to-morrow; they calmly leave their wounded until to-morrow, as many were left on the field at Gorny Dubnik; they have no conception of the value of time, which is all-important on the occasions of which I speak, and they are the sufferers oftener than any one else.

From the doctors at Strigli we learned that Lady Strangford had resolved to continue her work uninterrupted by the approach of the Russians, because the patients in her hospital were the worst cases in the town, and it was impossible to move them. When this became known there was a lively curiosity among the officers to examine the hospital, and the visitors began to pour in from the first hour of occupation, all the chief officers, from General Gourko down, being counted in the number. The Englishmen here have received nothing but kindness from the Russians, and Lady Strangford has been treated with marked consideration and deference, which I am sure she appreciates. There was some difficulty at first in explaining the difference between the Turkish ambulance, the Red Crescent Society, the Stafford House detachment, and the Hospital of Lady Strangford. Some misunderstanding followed, naturally enough, but everything has been amicably settled.

The interim between the departure of the Turks and the arrival of the Russians passed without incident and in comparative quiet. When the troops first entered the town some Cossacks presented themselves at the door of Lady Strang-

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ford's hospital and demanded admission, throwing the cap from Lady Strangford's head, because it was ornamented with the Red Crescent, but saw their mistake, and apologized before they were allowed to enter. A guard was immediately placed at all the entrances, and no one was permitted to pass except with the Red Cross or Crescent upon their arm, and the work in the hospital went on as usual, barring the interruptions caused by the desertions of the Bulgarians who were employed in the different wards. The patients number nearly 150; the hospital occupies a large school-house, and I need not pause to praise the internal arrangements, for this will be readily understood. During the evacuation many of the patients left their beds and followed the army, and Dr. Stephenson, Lady Strangford's surgeon, worked all night and the forenoon following in transporting to the hospital as many of the deserted wounded as there was room for, bringing some on his back and dragging others by hand in arabas with the aid of one or two other surgeons. Besides Dr. Stephenson, Drs. Wattie and Busby (of the Stafford House detachment), Drs. Ruddock, Macpherson, King, and Jennings (of the Red Cross), and their assistants, together with one other Englishman, one American, and several German doctors (all the latter in the Turkish service), remained in the town. I have only one word to say for the Englishmen who remained here, and that is that they have done their duty, cheerfully, promptly, and with a great deal of self-denial. Can any more just praise be given them than that they have done what was to be expected of them as men, as surgeons, and as Englishmen? The fact that Lady Strangford remained at her post at a time when her sex and her position were not the least protection, need only to be recorded to be appreciated.

Sofia has already so often been described that anything that I can write about that city at this time, when its principal shops are deserted, some of the best houses burned, and half its population fugitives, will have little value as a true picture of the place. There are a great many foreigners in the town, many of them formerly in the employment of the railway

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companies. Three consuls remain—the French, Italian, and Austrian. Italian was the first language I heard in the street, and the little Bulgarian boy who held my horse answered me with a clear Italian accent. There are French and Italian restaurants, where they charge now 300 piastres for what a week ago was readily given for thirty. Wine which sold for two francs now brings sixteen, and every other article has risen in like proportion, even to bread, a piastre loaf being readily sold for three and four piastres. Turkish paper money is worthless, and Russian roubles are now in general circulation. It is surprising to see how quickly the Russian money supplants that of the country. Gold rings upon every counter, roubles cram every till, for the few shops that are open are besieged with purchasers, who crowd and elbow for a place at the counter and buy provisions in great quantities, regardless of price. It does not take long for the Levantine traders to understand how to treat the Russians, and they quadruple their prices, and cling to the new tariff without yielding. These same fellows, who a week ago would gracefully come down in the price of their goods to one-third the sum originally demanded, now never drop a piastre, for they know they are sure to sell at any price.

It is curious to observe how apathetic the people are. A fire does not bring together a crowd, no one pays any attention to a wounded man in the streets, and the great multitude of Turkish refugees who were brought into the town, the most miserable, wretched-looking beings that were ever seen, half-frozen, half-starved, and quite done up, did not attract a passing glance. The wave of war has swept over these people, and has brought in its current new vices and increase of crime. There has been some firing in the streets at night, but although I have heard several shots, I have found no one who could confirm the reports that murders have been committed since the patrols have been in the streets. Very few or no Turkish families remained in the town. I have found one old Turk who, unable to flee, sits in his house and reads his Koran all day long, and receives the visits of the Russian officers with rare grace and a sympathetic manner that are most charming.

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With the partial stagnation of business, which was never very lively here, the consumption of provisions and the presence of a large floating population, Sofia will not be a pleasant place to winter in, so I am not sorry we are soon to move. Besides, the great plain beyond the next range of mountains is full of possibilities and promise, and there we hope for milder weather. It is disagreeable riding with the thermometer at five degrees below zero, and a constant fight with the cold is wearing to the constitution and trying to the patience. Our visit to Sofia has brought us back once more to the world, for here we have found papers nearly up to Christmas time. As my last mail reached me November 16th, it may be imagined that newspapers were welcome.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL GOURKO, SOFIA, *January 9th.*—The evacuation of Sofia was as unexpected as the fall of Plevna. From all indications, it seemed probable that the Turks would make a stand with sufficient force to prevent easy occupation of the town, and would defend the place with at least as much vigour as they had resisted the approach to its immediate neighbourhood. On New Year's Day the detachment commanded by General Wilhelminof was attacked near Gorny Bugarof with great desperation, and it was only after a fierce fight of some hours, and with a loss of 250, that the enemy was repulsed. Although the Russian positions were well chosen and commanded the road and the level ground near it, the Turks manœuvred so well and advanced with such recklessness, that they very nearly gained the day. In killed alone they lost upwards of 500; in wounded 1,500. The region in the vicinity of the village is thickly strewn with corpses, and even to this day the Bulgarians continue their horrible task of stripping the dead. The greater part of the dead lie within 100 feet of the shallow Russian rifle-pits, testifying to the heroism of the Turks, who after advancing across an open cornfield for half a mile ran straight up the slope within bayonetting distance of their foe, and held their ground until thinned out by the terrible fire, and at last turned back with the Russians upon their heels, and left half their number on the snow before

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they formed again on the road. After the fight there was an armistice, during which the wounded on both sides were carried off the field, but only the Russian dead were buried.

This brilliant little fight was going on while we were watching near Araba Konak the army of Chakir Pacha file up the hills beyond Dolny Kamarli in its hasty retreat southward. The following afternoon General Gourko was at Gorny Bugarof, having left Taskosen at noon. He reached the village just in time to hear the first few shots of a sharp little skirmish going on near the covered bridge over the Isker. The enemy had thrown up a short line of low earth-works on either side the road beyond the bridge, and with a detachment of two or three tabors in the trenches and three times this number in reserve, they attempted to prevent the passage of the river. The Praobrajensky regiment crossed on the ice, turning the Turks by either flank, and they retired after brief resistance, setting fire to the bridge and the village of Razdimne as they left. The soldiers reached the bridge before the flames had gained great headway, and began to throw water and snow upon the burning timbers with their copper pots, and extinguished the fire before the structure was damaged to any great extent.

General Gourko crossed while the fire was at its height, making his way with his accustomed coolness through the flame and smoke, the first one to pass over the bridge on horse-back, and his staff followed in momentary expectation that the flooring would give way. If the bridge had been blown up, the passage of the river would have caused no little delay and trouble, and the attempt to burn it at the last moment shows that its destruction was not long premeditated. I was not present at this skirmish, having hurried off to Strigli to ascertain the truth of the report which had been sent to the Grand Duke that Baker Pacha had been wounded and taken prisoner, but the scene is described to me as wonderfully dramatic and picturesque. It was almost midnight when I found the headquarters in the village of Gorny Bugarof, having satisfied myself that the captured Englishman was not Baker Pacha but a colonel of the same name, chief of

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the Turkish gendarmerie. It was a cold night, and the road was so slippery that the horses could scarcely stand, and it seemed as if the long, straight, monotonous road would never end. As I approached the village, the dead Turks, sabred by the Kuban Cossacks in their raid a few days ago, began to strew the ground thickly, thrown into the ditches to clear the way, or stretched out naked in the snow in the fields alongside, and when I rode up the hill to the town the soldiers were still at work carrying their dead of the day before to the graves in the cornfield.

The next day, as the enemy still continued to show a bold front, a strong column was sent around to the north of Sofia, and General Gourko made a personal reconnaissance in that direction, approaching within a mile of the city. Great camps were plainly visible near the road, the black lines of a dozen earthworks crowned the summits of the hills near the city on either side, and we could plainly see that the fortifications were manned. The attack was decided upon for the morning of the 5th, and I think General Gourko expected to lose three or four thousand men in the assault, for although he had so disposed his forces as to attack on three sides at once, the storming of the earthworks would have cost many lives. On the 3rd we moved our quarters again, this time to the establishment of some Turkish nabob near the covered bridge, and prepared to await the arrival of the troops at their designated positions ready for the attack.

I have detailed our movements in order to show the deliberation with which we approached the city, and to give an idea of how little we knew of what was passing almost within hearing distance of us. The evening of the 3rd there were some lights visible in the direction of Sofia, but there was so much haze that we could not distinguish whether they were camp fires or burning houses. It was an hour after midday on the 4th that a Cossack came riding in with a report that Bulgarians had arrived at the foreposts with the news that Sofia was evacuated. Everybody had been nerving up for the battle of the next day, and no one could credit the truth of the rumour. In a few moments a second

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horseman came in after a hard gallop, bringing official tidings that General Rauch was marching into Sofia to take possession. We were mounted and off at quick trot almost before the courier finished his report, and on the road we overtook a brigade of the guard marching with unfurled banners towards the distant mosques, singing as I have never heard them sing since I saw them cross the bridge at Sistova months ago, every man of them walking as proudly as if he alone had conquered provinces. They answered the salutation of the General cheerily and heartily. He paused only to charge them, with severity of expression in his voice that they knew meant prompt execution of his word, not to raise a hand to plunder on pain of severe and instant punishment, and galloped past to the city, already occupied by Cossacks and the advance guard of the column.

The excitement of that half-hour's ride was worth the days of exposure in the mountains, the long and tedious season of waiting; still I am not sure that, with all the triumphant feeling, there was not a tinge of disappointment in the thought that we had not met the enemy, for the game of hide and seek among the mountains was getting wearisome. We had missed the opportunity of smashing the Balkan Army, and it had slipped away to face us further south. As we neared the town the road was crowded with peasants hurrying in to have their share of Turkish loot, and scores of them were rummaging the deserted tents in the fields close by, and wrangling over the rubbish there.

A crowd of several hundred citizens, led by priests, with banners, crucifixes, and lanterns, and bearing a salver with bread and salt, offered these traditional symbols of hospitality to General Gourko, and then the priests and attendants headed the procession that filed slowly into the first narrow street. It was not the pictorial aspect of this triumphant entrance, nor the consciousness that this was an historic moment, nor, indeed, the sense of relief at the successful finish of the first great step of the campaign, that for the time fixed my thoughts, but it was rather the lack of heart in the whole business of the reception, the total absence of anything like frank and spontaneous joy in the crowd of

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Bulgarians who accompanied us into the town after the formal welcome at the gate. There were exceptions. Old men and women clasped their hands and wept for joy; intelligent citizens, of evident good standing in the city, showed by word and deed that they appreciated the change the arrival of the Russians would make.

I do not mean to say that the people were not unanimous in their welcome of the Russian army; I only assert that the contrast between the reception by the Bulgarians and a similar welcome by any other people I could name was very great. A race without heart, their enthusiasm has scarcely a spark of the real stuff in it, and as we rode through the streets that day the crowds gathered and gazed and hustled about, and looked as happy, perhaps, as Bulgarians can look; but not a cheer was heard—not even the murmur of gratification that one hears in the crowd at any fête; only a weary kind of listless satisfaction at the final arrival of the long-expected Russians was visible on the faces of those who welcomed us. What a contrast there was between the bronzed, sturdy soldiers of the Guard and the pale and feeble-looking men of the town! What a picture it made, General Gourko and his staff following the banners of the church, and sweeping along through the crooked streets; the aides-de-camp in the fantastic uniforms of the winter campaign; General Gourko at their head, trim, straight, and emotionless as ever; the hustling crowd of men and boys in many coloured costumes; on all sides the fez and the Oriental dress suggesting heat and sunshine; and through this flood of colour the cold grey rigid column of men whose type of face, whose dress, whose every motion, showed them to be of the north. On the one side, listlessness and inactivity, mental and physical; on the other, earnestness of purpose, energy, and physical strength. There is little in common between deliverer and delivered, except some similarity of language.

Few houses on our route were not barred and shuttered, except those whose swinging doors and broken windows showed them to be already plundered. Out of the windows of some large houses were showered sprigs of evergreen from the hands of young women; there was a lively rush for the

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church, where a short ceremony was performed, and the triumphal entry was ended. The order in the town was perfect. A large patrol of soldiers walked the streets, preventing effectually the destruction of property and pillage. The Turkish quarter had already been completely sacked by the Bulgarians before the troops came in, and most of the loot was hidden away, but whenever any one was found with plundered effects he was promptly arrested and the goods exposed in the streets under guard to be claimed by their proper owners. I made this a matter of special investigation, and scoured the city in search of plunderers and loot, and found not a single soldier with any article of value except a Kuban Cossack with a small carpet. I naturally supposed that this legitimatized brigand would sell his prize, and when I offered him a round sum for it he replied, without hesitation, that he had taken it from a Bulgarian peasant, and was carrying it to deposit with unclaimed goods, and I watched him throw it on the pile with the rest. One of his comrades, however, was proved to have stolen watches and money from foreign doctors, and citizens, and by order of General Gourko he was tied with ropes and led away and shot.

This is not the first time that I have entered a city with victorious troops; but it is the first occasion in my experience when order was the rule, plunder the exception. To be sure the shops were all rifled before we came in; but the Bulgarians had to be hunted out of the houses on all sides. There was plenty of clothing and other articles the soldiers were greatly in need of, which were collected together by the troops, not distributed among them, and the disorder, if any existed, was only momentary. The only approach to anything like violence that met my notice was the knocking the fez from the heads of the citizens, and in this sport of doubtful taste I saw some officers thoughtlessly take part.

The church where the religious ceremonies were conducted is next door to the hospital of Lady Strangford, and this was the first place General Gourko visited, simply presenting his compliments to the lady and assuring her that she would be protected in her work. Beside Lady Strangford, her four female nurses, and Dr. Stephenson, the surgeon of the

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hospital, there also remained at their posts Doctors Wattie and Busby of the Stafford House detachment, and Ruddock and Macpherson of the Red Crescent, with dressers. From these I learned many interesting details of the evacuation. The town had been in considerable disorder for several days, for the Russians were expected to arrive a week earlier, in fact, the first question put to me by the doctors was, "Why were you so long on the road?"

Suleiman Pacha had made a flying visit here about Christmas time, but no one knew he was here until he was gone. From the day the road was cut there was no longer any idea of defending the town, and the troops formed their battalions in the streets on the evening of the 3rd, and left quietly. The signal of the evacuation of the troops was also a signal for the flight of those Turkish families who had not yet departed, and the clumsy arabas, laden with human beings and household goods, piled in promiscuously, creaked over the frosty snow toward the line of retreat, which took the direction of Radomir. There were few enough transports for provisions and ammunition, so the wounded were ordered to quit the town the day of the retreat, and such of the poor wretches who could crawl away left the hospitals and dragged themselves towards the hills. Terrors inspired by the tales that the Russians would massacre all their prisoners gave them strength to begin their journey. Between 5,000 and 6,000 thus fled, the majority of them probably to die in the snow before the next day.

There were less than a thousand wounded left in the town after this wholesale evacuation, so the surgeons in the Turkish service drew lots to decide which ten of their number should remain. This was a large proportion, as there had been but about thirty in charge of the thousands here. Among the ten who remained are one Englishman, one American, and two or three Germans. It is said on all sides that the order had been received from Constantinople to burn the town and blow up the mosques which were stored with powder. I do not know whether this is true or not, I only am sure that a printed order was issued to each Bulgarian family to leave the town, accompanied with the verbal message that they

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took upon themselves the responsibility of remaining. There was no systematic attempt made, however, to burn the place, and although the Bashi-Bazouks set it on fire in several places but few houses were burned. Some of the shops had been deserted long ago by their proprietors, and the rest of them were gutted and the loot distributed during the withdrawal of the troops. Everybody took whatever he could lay his hands on, the magazines were broken open, and the Bulgarians all armed themselves and did not hesitate to use their new toys.

The fears of the wounded Turks were not altogether without foundation, for during the night many of them were murdered while the Russians were still miles away, and the same fiends who cut the throats of the helpless victims welcomed the next day the Russians with an innocent smile, and called them brothers. Household goods and provisions strewed the streets, trampled into the snow by the passers-by, and it was a night of confusion. The Europeans who remained in the town feared alike Circassian and Cossack, and prepared to defend themselves against the irregular soldiery. At daybreak there was scarcely a Turkish soldier in the town, and the Bulgarians assembled from the neighbouring villages completed the desolation that had begun in the night. The morning passed slowly, and still no Russians in sight. The English doctors gathered as many of the deserted wounded as they could care for, and carried them into their hospitals. Finally, shortly after ten o'clock, a single Russian officer, accompanied by two Cossacks, rode along the road towards the town. His first inquiry was, "Have you any sugar?" and, being answered in the affirmative, he rode into the town about as calmly as if he had come solely in search of the much-desired luxury. It was four hours later before General Gourko came in, as I have described above, and order was already restored.

Since we had been hearing all the way down from Plevna reports of the great numbers of sick and wounded in Sofia, the hospitals were the first places visited, and the round was through a succession of charnel-houses. Every Turkish hospital was in a most foul and filthy condition: unburied

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dead, many days old, cumbered the passage-ways and infected the air with unendurable odours, and side by side with the corpses lay helpless sick and wounded, just as we found them at Plevna.

General Gourko walked through all these hospitals, entering rooms where his aides could not force themselves to go, examining the typhus wards, and passing about among the corpses with the same immobility of expression with which he will ride into hot musketry fire, to satisfy himself personally of the state of affairs. Probably it was quite beyond the comprehension of the wounded that this arch Giaour, this leader of dogs and assassins, took enough interest in their condition to do what their own Pacha never thought of doing, and when, after the visit of the General, instead of being murdered, they were cared for, and slowly something like cleanliness began to be established in the hospital, then at last they gradually understood they were to be well treated, and, although one or two went mad with fright the first day of the occupation, they are now quiet and contented.

What would have become of them if the foreigners had not stuck by them I dislike to conjecture. The soldiers had been on short rations for days, and bread was a necessity for them. Immense quantities of flour and meat, both salt and fresh, and other provisions were found in the stores here, but the public ovens that made bread were too few to supply the demands of the soldiers; and no measures were taken to requisition private ovens; consequently the bakers who had furnished the hospitals refused to take any orders from them, afraid of compromising themselves with the Russians, and up to the evening of the third day of the occupation the wounded were without bread. The majority were supplied with enough food to sustain life out of the private stores of the doctors: many suffered from hunger; a few died from insufficient nourishment, and the Bulgarian attendants having deserted almost to a man immediately after the occupation, it was only with great difficulty that the wounds were dressed. These wretches of attendants took the opportunity of robbing the wounded of all their money and

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valuables before they deserted, thus adding one of the most brutal of crimes to their cowardly desertion, and completing the list of dastardly acts, which I am obliged, in strict justice, to enumerate.

On the morning of the fourth day of occupation rations were distributed to the wounded; the Russian doctors had already begun work, and the hospitals were taken in hand. It is possible that the sufferings of the wounded have been exaggerated; but as eighty died in the Konak in a single night it appears to be proved that they were neglected. The question of what should be done with the foreigners found working for the Turks was not settled in a hurry. No one, in fact, seemed to know what would become of them. Up to date those who were actually in the Turkish service serving under contract for the war are still in ignorance of their fate. Lady Strangford has been treated with every consideration and respect, and would have been provided with means of transport if she had decided to return to the Turkish lines again. She, however, with her entire suite, will continue her work here, and the surgeons of the Stafford House and Red Crescent remain also. The value of their services is fully appreciated by the Russians, who have given them every possible aid to finish the work they have begun. Several Turkish surgeons were captured in the pursuit of the army which evacuated Sofia, and great numbers of arabas with Turkish refugee families from the villages towards Berkovec. They were in a frightful state of misery, and were immediately sent away to their homes. The country towards the Salonica Railway is reported to be filled with refugees; half of them will be dead before they return to their villages.

In regard to the movement towards Philippopolis, which is already begun, I can give little information. Ichtiman has been several days in Russian hands. The Turks sacked and set fire to the town when they evacuated it, and many of the inhabitants were massacred. Some of the assassins were captured by the Russians and promptly hanged. Ichtiman is fully two-thirds of the way to Vejtrenova, where the plain of Tatar-Bazardjik begins, but between these towns there is

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a more difficult pass than we have yet crossed ; but, as will be seen on the Austrian map, there are several other roads equally practicable, and if the enemy hold positions there they can doubtless be turned, if this is not practically accomplished already.

General Gourko's army is now so strong that if it were divided into three detachments either one could neutralize the Turkish force in this vicinity if it has not received great reinforcements. Therefore, serious obstacles to his eastward march are not to be apprehended. Moreower, the troops are in excellent health and spirits, and endure the cold wonderfully. The weather, which has been very cold—the thermometer falling almost every night as low as five degrees below zero—has changed to-day; the sun is shining warm and bright, and there is every prospect of a thaw. The winter has been thus far most favourable to the campaign, and a few days of soft weather would hinder materially the advance; but there are enough captured provisions to supply the army for a month; so there is no longer any anxiety about transports, which are, however, fast coming up. The rich villages in the line of march will furnish plenty of forage and shelter, with unlimited quantities of sheep and cattle.

The capture of Pirot by the Servians, and the near approach of the advanced guard of Prince Milan's army to the Russian lines, decided General Gourko to open communications with them, and Prince Tzereteleff, escorted by a sotnia of Cossacks, rode to meet the Servian army the night preceding the occupation of Sofia. He has just returned, and gives a most flattering account of the condition of the troops, their conduct, and general spirits. He found the main body of the detachment, the Timok Corps, under the command of Colonel Horvatovitch, still at Pirot, but about to move southward upon Radomir. The capture of Pirot had been attended with little or no disorder; the Turkish property had been confiscated, and the army was now living on captured provisions, and had plenty for a number of weeks. Pirot was taken after a fight of a whole day, with the loss of 250 men; twelve cannon were captured. The assassination of Colonel Horvatovitch was attempted while he was making

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his triumphal entry into the town, but failed. The Cossacks returned delighted with their visit to their cousins, for they could understand their language, and received unlimited hospitality. The understanding was that the Servians were to garrison Sofia, but this is not the fact. The Servian soldiers have already made their appearance in the streets here, but the main force will move southward *viâ* Radomir, The Bulgarian volunteers who have been parading here have been sent to join the Servians.

From the troops in pursuit of the column of Turks retreating from Baba Konak, we learned the other day that Lieutenant-General Katarli, commanding the third divison of the Guard, had been killed, and General Philosof wounded, in a slight skirmish near Bunovo. The report that reaches us now is that the detachment was passing through a deep ravine, and these generals, with aides-de-camp, were riding along about 400 yards in rear of the advance guard, without having taken the precaution to throw out skirmishers on either side the road. Suddenly a volley of musketry came from the right side among the rocks, and the two generals, with four Cossacks, fell. Philosof has since died. The Bulgarians in Petricevo report that the Pachas were jubilant over the affair, and the death of General Gourko, for it was believed to be he, was telegraphed to Constantinople.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE ADVANCE TO PHILIPPOPOLIS.

View of the Campaign in Roumelia.—General Gourko's Great Achievement.—A Leap in the Dark.—Again on the March.—Prospect of Peace.—A Bivouac in the Snow.—Tactics of the Turkish Retreat on Adrianople.—Unpleasant Position of Fuad Pacha and his Army.—Trajan's Gate.—Capture of 300 Waggons.—In Sight of Philippopolis.—Baker Pacha's Division.—Exhaustion on both Sides.—The Battle near Philippopolis.—More Fighting.—Forlorn State of Philippopolis.—Capture of Forty Krupp Guns.—Suleiman Pacha's Difficulties.—Recapitulation of Three Weeks' Work.—Philippopolis.—Fuller Details of the Recent Operations.—The Departure from Sofia.—A Change of Temperature.—Report of an Armistice.—Condition of Ichtiman.—Retreat of the Turks.—The Fall of Shipka.—Passage through Trajan's Gate.—A Series of Slides.—Strange-looking Houses.—A Relief to the Eye.—Burning and Plunder of Tartar Bazardjik.—Multitude of Fugitives.—A Priest's Discovery.—Passage of the River Maritza.—Close Pursuit.—Count Schouvaloff's Movement.—Daring of a Circassian.—A Sharp Engagement.—General Schildner-Schuldner.—Krudener's Detachment.—General Gourko's Order.—Adventures of Captain Bourago and his Little Band in Quest of Lodgings.—Entry into Philippopolis.—Condition of Affairs in the City.—Scene at the Ford.—Prince Tzereteleff.—Relief for the Suffering.—Beyond the City.—The Turks at Bay.—Three Days of Fighting.—Homeric Heroism.—Precipitate Flight.—Break Up of the Turkish Army.

THE marvellously rapid pursuit of the Turkish forces to Philippopolis by the army of General Gourko, furnishes the theme of the letters in the present chapter. The movement, it will be remembered, ended in the disorderly flight of the Turks, after a final gallant stand on the eastern side of that city:—

\+ PHILIPPOPOLIS, *January 18th.*—The march of the entire army of General Gourko from Sofia to Philippopolis in the short space of six days—crossing the Great Balkan range in severe winter weather, driving the scattered forces of Sulieman Pacha before it in every direction, occupying the city after a

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series of bloody engagements—is one of the most brilliant feats of the war.

Although the dispositions of the troops were known at the date of my despatch from Sofia, it was evidently imprudent to speak of them, because we expected a stout resistance at four points in the mountains, namely, north of Samakova, at Trajan's Gate beyond Ichtiman, in the valley of the river Topolnica below Petricevo, and at Otlukkoi. General Gourko divided his force into four detachments. The column on the right, which started from Sofia the 7th of the month, was under command of General Weliaminoff, and was instructed to advance rapidly upon Samakova, in order to cut off the retreat of the Turks who left Sofia *viâ* Radomir. The main column, commanded by Count Schouvaloff, marched from Sofia on the morning of the 9th by the Ichtiman road, and was expected to advance upon Tartar Bazardjik only after the Turkish positions in the Trajan's Gate had been rendered untenable by the forward movement of the flanking columns east of the Ichtiman road. The detachment of General Schilden-Schuldner was to follow the river Topolnica; and on the extreme left a strong column, led by General Krudener was ordered to proceed by way of Otlukoi, following the line of retreat of Chakir Pacha's army from Kamarli, uniting with the other columns before Tatar Bazardjik. The small detachment under Count Komaroffsky, which had occupied Slatica, was to proceed to join the column of General Karzoff, to which it belonged, and which was advancing, *viâ* Karlovo, to complete the connection with the army which crossed the Shipka Pass.

The success of this complex movement depended entirely on the timely arrival of the separate columns at their destinations, and as the weather gave signs of breaking up, and the communications were at the best extremely difficult and uncertain, it seemed very much like a leap in the dark to cut loose from the base of supplies and strike away into the heart of the great range of white peaks that formed a serrated wall along the southern horizon. Six day's rations of hard bread were distributed to the soldiers, who, though somewhat recovered from the exhausting labours of the first passage, were still far

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from fresh. Every piece of artillery had a double quota of horses. The limbers and caissons were piled up with extra ammunition, and the columns went away as merrily as if they were on the homeward trip. General Gourko and staff accompanied the main column, but did not leave Sofia until noon on the 9th.

The sun was shining warm and bright, the road was flooded with water, and there was every prospect of a complete thaw, as we rode along that afternoon past hundreds of pack-horses and ox-carts that toiled in the train of the marching infantry. Before we reached the mountains the thermometer suddenly fell below freezing point, a driving snowstorm burst upon us, and at sunset we could scarcely see the road before us.

While we were fighting our way along, a courier came up, bringing the news that a parliamentaire had come into the lines of General Weliaminoff, bringing a telegram from the Minister of War at Constantinople that an armistice had been accepted by the Russians, and that peace was imminent. General Gourko sent a telegram to the Grand Duke announcing the fact, and we pushed on, forgetting the snow and the cold in the exhiliration of the moment, discussing the probabilities of peace, and congratulating ourselves on the approach of the end which we all felt sure was close at hand. The proposition of an armistice was additional proof that the enemy had lost heart.

The village of Vakarel on the road was burned. We found miserable shelter from the storm in a small village near, but the infantry was obliged to bivouac in the snow by the roadside. In the morning everything was frozen solid, the road was one sheet of ice, a strong wind was blowing, and as we rode through the bivouacs before daybreak and found the soldiers huddled together around the fires, half-buried in the drifting snow, it seemed impossible for human beings to live in the extreme cold, without even the protection of shelter tents.

At Ichtiman we received the most gratifying report that the Turks had evacuated their positions in the Trajan's Gate, and that Samakova was also in our hands, and the appearance of Major Zeki, an aide-de-camp of Sulieman Pacha, who had

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come into the lines with a message for the Grand Duke, seemed a confirmation of the news of the preceding evening. However, during the day a despatch from head-quarters arrived with instructions to continue the advance, notwithstanding the reports of an armistice, and the cavalry pushed on over the Pass, and occupied Vejtrenova. No reports reached us from Banja, whither it was supposed that Weliaminoff's column was driving the enemy, but we hurried on the morning of the 11th over the Pass known as the Trajan's Gate to Vejtrenova, arriving just in time to see the black lines of the Turkish column filing along the road near Simcina.

The situation of the Turks was now comprehensible. The plan of retreat arranged by Sulieman Pacha was to withdraw the forces from Samakova and Ichtiman in sufficient time to concentrate them at Tatar-Bazardjik, and follow the army of Chakir Pacha to Adrianople. The plan evidently counted on a delay of some days on account of the reported armistice, for the Samakova detachment under Fuad Pacha had a longer and more difficult road than the Russians to Tatar Bazardjik, and not a day the start of them. Thus, when this stratagem failed, the Samakova force found itself obliged to march day and night in order to debouch into the plain before its pursuers. Fuad Pacha had perhaps 25,000 men in all, and he manœuvred with no little skill.

It was indeed an uncomfortable position to be in, retreating shoulder to shoulder with the advance of the pursuers, threatened constantly in the rear, in battle array from sunrise till dark, and marching all night. It would have tried the pluck and endurance of any army. Fuad, by placing the Maritza between him and the Russians, which he did at the first opportunity protected his line of march, to some extent, and although there was no road on the south side of the river so good as the high road, he moved with great rapidity, especially after he lost the bulk of his waggon train.

Of course the detachment that occupied Trajan's Gate had plenty of time to get away, and the army of Chakir Pacha had passed through Otlukkoi a week ago, so that the Samakova force was menaced with complete isolation from the rest of

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the army, and they retreated with the celerity that their situation demanded. Trajan's Gate, a pass of great height, and difficult even in summer, was a solid sheet of ice when we crossed. The smoothshod horses fell at every second step, the infantry moved only with the greatest difficulty, and was obliged to bivouac in the mountains because the road was blocked by cannon which were slid down the steep places with great risk and toil, and we had the doubtful satisfaction of watching from Vejtrenova the rearguard of the Turkish army disappear on its way towards Tatar-Bazardjik, unable to pursue it, because the infantry did not get over the pass. Nevertheless, during the night the Moscow regiment captured a train of nearly 300 waggons and dispersed three battalions of the enemy.

Next day, New Year's Day, old style, the four columns joined in the vicinity of Tatar-Bazardjik, the detachment Weliaminoff being somewhat behind its assigned position, having delayed one day on account of the rumoured armistice. Tatar-Bazardjik was already on fire in several places as we came in sight of it from the Pass, and as we reached the summit of the last hill bordering the great plain of Philippopolis early in the morning, nine distinct columns of smoke were rising from the town. Half a dozen battalions of the enemy, Baker Pacha's division, were drawn up across the road a mile in front of the town with two lines of skirmishers and a strong rearguard of cavalry posted on the road, and a large detachment on the right and left. Evidently nothing was to be gained by attacking them, for they were manœuvring to cover their retreat, which we hoped to block the next day, so there was only a little artillery practice and slight skirmish between the outposts.

The next morning we rode through Tatar-Bazardjik, completely pillaged and half burned, with scarcely an inhabitant left, and pushed on until sunset. We were then opposite the rear of the Turkish column, separated from it by the River Maritza, fordable only at long distances. The line of march of both armies was parallel, the one hurrying along the railway to reach Philippopolis, the other pushing forward on the road to head off the retreat. The troops on both sides

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were nearly exhausted; but there was this notable difference between them—the Turkish stragglers were almost always cut off, while the Russians, after a rest of a few hours in some village, rejoined their regiments; and while the Turkish force was gradually dribbling away, the Russian columns kept full.

Part of Schouvaloff's detachment, after a march of thirty miles without halt, forded the river on the evening of the 13th, with the thermometer at zero, and pushed on rapidly after the Turks, who were still running, but finding them too strong to risk an attack with the small force across the river, the detachment was quartered in the village. At daybreak Count Schouvaloff, with a dozen battalions, found himself within 1,500 yards of the enemy, who were so worn out that they had been unable to retreat further, and he began a demonstration to delay, if possible, further retreat until General Schilden-Schuldner's brigade could ford the Maritza near Philippopolis, and turn their right.

It will be evident that Schouvaloff's column, which was expected to be the last in order of the four, was really the first, and on this devolved the duty of arresting the retreat of the enemy, while this *rôle* was to have been filled by Weliaminoff's detachment. The Turks, some forty battalions strong, occupied a position across the railway, their left resting on the village of Kavatair, their right on the village of Airanli, and their centre on a small mountain behind Kadikoi, and Schouvaloff's demonstration was made against their left and centre. The fight lasted all day long, and as the rice fields afforded little shelter the losses were considerable on both sides, the Russians counting over 300. While this affair was going on, the column of General Krüdener marched along the road towards Philippopolis, while Schilden-Schuldner was ordered to push on to turn the enemy's right.

At sunrise on the day of the battle General Gourko and his staff were on the road at the point where it is nearest the river. The road was crowded with artillery, infantry, and pack-horses, when suddenly the right of the Turkish force appeared within rifle range on the other side the stream. Three battalions were immediately sent across the river, part

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wading, part carried on the horses of the staff officers and escort, and soon the firing which had already begun on the right spread along to our neighbourhood. Batteries unlimbered right and left of us, and went to work. Turkish shell began to burst near the road, and bullets dropped on all sides, wounding men and horses. Fortunately we were sheltered somewhat by a small mound of earth, and there we stood all day, the battle raging without intermission.

For hours we watched for the advance guard of Schilden-Schuldner's column, which had long been ordered up, but it did not come along until late in the afternoon, having halted in a village while the General rode slowly up to consult with General Gourko. Thus the turning movement failed, for the men did not get across the ford until sunset, and during the night the enemy quietly slipped past Schilden-Schuldner between him and the mountains, and took new positions between Stanimaka and Derbendere. Krüdener's detachment during the day occupied that part of Philippopolis north of the Maritza, but the bridge was burned, and no attempt was made to ford the stream. A couple of cannon in position on the rocky height in the centre of the town shelled Krüdener's force the whole day, inflicting only trifling loss.

During the evening the squadron of eighty Dragoons of the Guard which had carried the advance battalions of Schilden-Schuldner across the river, led by Captain Bourago, raided into the city and found it evacuated, but a force of the enemy, probably 1,500, assembled in some disorder near the railway station, which was burning. Dismounting, and leaving their horses in shelter, this small company advanced quietly along the road to the station, and finding cover in a ditch within short range of the Turks, opened fire on them suddenly, cheering and making all the noise possible. The Turks at first returned the fire vigorously, but soon retired, evidently believing they were attacked by a large force, and the city was left in possession of Captain Bourago and his small squadron.

Early in the forenoon of the 16th, when we rode out upon the left bank of the Maritza, opposite the city, a whole army

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corps was waiting there by the burned bridge, while an immense crowd of Bulgarians was gathered on the further shore, shouting and gesticulating that the river was too deep to ford at that place. The bridge was completely destroyed, and no one seemed to have been master enough of the situation to look for a fording-place or arrange a ferry. Prince Tzereteleff crossed in a small boat immediately after the arrival of General Gourko, and in a few moments a rope ferry was rigged. Several natives were ferried across to point out the fords, and in an hour General Gourko and his staff entered the town. There was no ceremonious welcome, merely a service in the church.

General Gourko took up his quarters in the Russian Consulate. The officers found luxurious lodgings in the houses of the chief citizens of the town. Good order was the rule, and although the cannon were still roaring on the mountain sides south of the city, we forgot everything in the enjoyment of the first hours of comfort since Sofia. All the night of the 16th and the whole of the following day the battle went on in the mountain. When Fuad had withdrawn his force through the narrow gap left between Schouvaloff and the mountains he took up position a few miles south of Philippopolis in the vineyards, obliged to defend himself from Weliaminoff, who began to hammer away at the rear guard, and also compelled to face Schouvaloff and Schilden-Schuldner, who threatened his advance.

How many thousands of the Turkish force had been placed *hors de combat*, captured, dispersed, or had escaped to Suleiman Pacha, it is difficult to say, but when they made their stand in the mountains with their backs toward the snow-covered slopes they counted not more than 15,000 men. General Dondeville, with the third division of the Guard, forded the Maritza below Philippopolis, marched up the Stanimka road, that by which Suleiman with a reported force of 30,000 to 40,000 men had escaped, occupied the town, and thus completed the semicircle of 30,000 Russians around half the number of Turks. The latter had lost all their baggage, had open to them no way of retreat for their artillery, were without food and probably short of ammunition,

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and had been marching and fighting for the last week, day and night; but once at bay they fought like lions.

On the morning of the 17th they charged down the slope with the bayonet in a mad endeavour to recapture the eighteen cannon left in Dondeville's hands the day before. One of the commanders, generally believed to be Fuad himself, rushed into the thick of the fight with Dondeville's troops, was surrounded, and is reported to have killed and wounded seventeen Russians with his own sword before he was finally cut down. But this headlong assault was stoutly resisted, General Krasnoff especially distinguishing himself at the head of the brigade of the third division, and that day twelve additional cannon were abandoned by the Turks as they retreated sullenly from one terrace to another; and when, after a most heroic but hopeless resistance, the disorganized, exhausted, famished, half-frozen remnant of an army could hold a bold front no longer, it broke up into small bands, and under cover of darkness dispersed back in the mountains, leaving the remaining twenty cannon on the field.

After nine days' marching, with three successive days' fighting in severe weather, all this on six days' rations of hard bread, the Russian troops were unable to continue the pursuit, and must now rest for some days. The total loss is about 1,000. The prisoners amount to over that number. Fifty-six cannon have been taken, and a great army completely broken up, smashed entirely to pieces. It is possible that the majority of the routed force will try and find its way to Adrianople, following the river Arda, but the road may be cut long before they come out into the valley of the Maritza.

Meantime, we hear very little of the movements of the other armies. Part of the Shipka force made a detour by way of Cirpan, not knowing that Gourko was so near Philippopolis and has now swung to the eastward again. Three days ago there was a small fight at Tirnova, the junction of the Yamboli railway. The place was occupied at the date of this despatch. A large force of cavalry under General Skobeleff, the elder, is supposed to be near Haskioi, and Hermanli must

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be occupied before this. It is not likely that Gourko's force will form the reserve of the armies marching upon Adrianople. A much more congenial duty would be to act as a flanking column against the latter city, crossing the range of mountains south-east of Philippopolis, which is probably the part it will play in the campaign. The prospect of the passage of the third mountain range is not agreeable.

Philippopolis has suffered both from fire and the yataghan, and although the order in the town is to all appearance perfect there are still occasional murders. The Bulgarians are all armed, the majority with improved rifles, which they seek occasion to use, for there are men enough of the Bashi-Bazouk order among them. Although no special cases have come under my notice, I do not doubt that the soldiers have plundered to some extent and that unarmed Turks have been killed, and also I must make the same observation that I did at Sofia, that there is very little system in the regulation of affairs in Philippopolis; but as the gallows which ornamented many street corners have been taken down only within a day or two, having been in use since last summer, it is no wonder that the Bulgarians are tempted to easy revenge.

We entered the city when the bazaar was already burned, and all the shops in its vicinity gutted, and the goods scattered in the street or carried away. That portion of the city near the bridge on both banks of the river has been partially burned. The Turkish quarter is entirely deserted, but the rest of the city wears very much its usual aspect. To-day several shops have been opened. Prices have quadrupled at once, as they did in Sofia, and the few merchants who have been so fortunate as to save their stock are in a fair way to become millionaires. The great fear of the inhabitants now is, not that the Turkish army will return, but that the Moslem population in the mountains between here and the sea, which is notoriously vindictive, will take advantage of the absence of the Russians to revenge themselves for the capture of the city. A strong force of occupation will be left, however, and little danger from unorganized depredation is to be anticipated.

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January 19th (Midnight).—The departure of my courier having been delayed on account of the insecurity of the roads, I am able to give an account of the capture of forty additional Krupp guns by the detachment under General Skobeleff the elder. The force of Suleiman Pacha when it left this city on the evening of the 15th took the road to Stanimaka, thence proceeded toward Hermanli by the mountain road south of the main highway to Haskioi, where the route is indicated on the Austrian map by a spotted line. Prisoners report that he had the larger portion of his infantry in front, followed by his artillery, with a rear-guard of five battalions. The road over the watershed was so difficult that the artillery was delayed for a long time there. Meanwhile six squadrons of Skobeleff's cavalry came up, and finding the enemy in a blocked road charged upon them, routing the rear-guard, and capturing the cannon, forty in number.

It is doubtless the endeavour of Suleiman to reach Adrianople, but he will have to travel fast in order to get ahead of the Russians, for Skobeleff the younger was at Tirnova, the junction of the Philippopolis and Yamboli Railway, on the 17th. While Suleiman must now make his way towards Adrianople through the mountains the whole distance, Skobeleff's force has a good road along the valley of the Maritza. The loss of Suleiman's artillery will also greatly diminish the effectiveness of his army if he reaches Adrianople, for it is said to be guns that are needed in the extensive fortifications there, even more than men, and the loss of upwards of 200 cannon within a month on this side of the Balkans cannot be counterbalanced by even the most desperate resistance.

To sum up the work of the past three weeks accomplished by General Gourko's command: it has forced two great Balkan passes; occupied Sofia and Philippopolis; entirely smashed the whole Turkish army of this department, reinforced by twenty battalions from the Rasgrad army, with the exception of a few thousand men who are accompanying Suleiman Pacha; taken thirteen guns at Araba Konak, four at Sofia, and ninety-four Krupps and three muzzle-loaders near Philippopolis, and all this with a probable loss of 1,500 men, all told.

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Of course we hear plenty of rumours of peace, but the first official news of anything like negotiations has come from head-quarters to-day, where two Ministers arrived from Constantinople. Long before this despatch reaches the Danube we shall be far on the way towards Adrianople, and somewhere in the vicinity of that city I expect to date my next letter.

The next letter from the same Correspondent reviews in fuller detail the recent operations of General Gourko. Although it necessarily embraces incidents already described, it comprises much that is not mentioned in the previous letter, written with a view to transmission by telegraph; hence it forms a supplement to the preceding narrative, which may be read with advantage by those who are anxious to obtain a complete view of the most decisive movement of the war.

+ PHILIPPOPOLIS, *January 18th.*—If I were to write on the subject which at the present moment interests me the most, this letter would be an essay on the luxury of a bed, for it is three months, almost to a day, since I have slept in civilized fashion. The trenches at Plevna, the snow banks in the Balkans, and peasants' huts all over the country have furnished lodgings of every possible grade of discomfort during the short season. Sofia was rich in baths and all articles of diet, but even there beds and stoves were not to be found, and we only encamped in the houses there as we had done in the mud cabins in the villages, and were only in a degree more comfortable.

But Philippopolis gives us everything, from the smallest article of table furniture to spacious rooms and luxurious beds, and with the straws from the last bivouac still clinging to our clothing we walk about like princes in the frescoed halls, actually sit in easy chairs and feel our feet press soft rugs, and are for once during these weeks of cold weather free from numb hands and aching feet.

It hardly seems possible, even as I write it, that since we started across the Balkans, with the exception of four days at Sofia,

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we have never on a single occasion found quarters that could be called comfortable, rarely anything more than a shelter from the storm in windowless rooms or miserable sheds. General Gourko never gives those who are with him time enough to think of anything except the movements of the troops, for he is generally up and in the saddle before daybreak, and seldom reaches his quarters before dark. His energy and activity have no limits, and his endurance is simply wonderful. When every other officer is bundled up into a shapeless mass with furs and mufflers, he rides along in his tight-fitting blue surtout as if it were a pleasant autumn day. When every one is worn out he is as fresh as ever; when all are asleep, he is awake; in moments of the greatest excitement for every one else, he is calm and emotionless, and when the time comes to be merry he can join in a laugh with the rest. Not to discuss his merits as a commanding general, for I believe they are eloquent enough to need no defence, I can say that as a man and a soldier he has the hearty esteem of all who are intimate enough with him to understand him, and possesses the entire confidence of his officers and soldiers to the very last man.

The days I have passed in the suite of General Gourko are so crowded with incidents and adventure that weeks seem as months, while the days, as they pass, seem always too short for the work we have on hand. It may be said of him, as may be remarked with truth of only one or two other Generals in the Russian army, that he does not drink tea,—that is, always in the Russian sense, where tea drinking means wasting the best hours of the day in listless inactivity over glasses of the refreshing beverage. This is a habit which no one in the suite of General Gourko is likely to contract. We consider ourselves pretty fortunate if we manage to have time in the morning to drink a hasty glass of tea before the General is leading the way to the front, for if there is any front he is sure to be there early, and he is as reluctant to leave the positions as he is anxious to get there in the beginning. I doubt much if any other general would have led an army across the Balkans as successfully as he has done, for the success of the undertaking is due more to his personal energy

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and activity than to anything else, as the history of the movements of the different detachments proves. The column which General Gourko accompanies always arrives in time, and always accomplishes the work laid out for it.

A warm south wind tempted us towards its source as we rode out of Sofia at midday, a week ago. The air was as balmy as in the Bay of Naples; the snow melted rapidly, and the road was covered at intervals with great pools of water from the overflowing streams. On we rode, as if on a pleasure excursion, along the southern border of the valley, towards the white peaks in the south-east, past regiment after regiment of infantry laden down with sacks of hard bread as large as a bushel, many of the soldiers with Turkish shoes in the place of the boots ruined in the climb among the trees and rocks of the first Balkan range, nearly all with some small valueless souvenir of their visit to Sofia; on through droves of bullocks, between double rows of cannon piled up with hay and grain and boxes of spare ammunition; past hundreds of pack horses with the baggage of the officers, to the first low hills of the northern slopes. Many of us, believing in the promise of a thaw, had left furs and extra wraps with the baggage.

No one foretold the sudden change in temperature that was sprung upon us, and within the space of a very few moments after reaching the hills we had left the zone of warmth and sunshine, and were in a stratum of freezing air. A blinding snowstorm came driving on from the west, and at sunset we were toiling up the first steep slopes of the mountains half-frozen, quite forlorn and out of temper; for it was evident that we should have at the best only a cold and miserable shelter that night. Just the needful stimulant come to us at the right moment, for a Cossack came trotting up through the snow and handed General Gourko a despatch, which told how the Turks had sent a parlementaire with the assurance of an armistice arranged between the two nations, and how peace was imminent. After this item of startling news we were able to bear cheerfully even the temporary loss of our baggage with our rugs and overcoats, as well as the eatables, and we went to sleep in a fireless room with frozen garments, quite happy at the first hint of peace. The horses huddled together

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and shivered all night, and when we mounted an hour before daylight the poor beasts were glad enough to warm themselves with the exercise.

It was a weirdly picturesque scene the long file of horsemen winding over the bleak white hills in the dim light, an icy wind driving clouds of snow from the feet of the horses, the procession moving on without a word or a gesture. We came unexpectedly and unannounced upon the bivouac of the infantry around the burned village of Vakarel. The men were nestled together behind banks of earth and snow around great blazing fires, many of them asleep, some wandering about among the fires. The presence of the General called all to their feet, and they answered his salutation as cheerily as if they were on the parade ground. The cannon left in the road were half buried in great drifts, and the guard, pacing rapidly his short beat, could not keep his path open in the whirling snow. The morning was cold and raw, and a dreary grey sky made the landscape seem doubly bleak and uninviting, and we followed the winding road, now slippery and blown clear of snow, down into the little basin where Ichtiman lay in the centre of a circle of pure white, broken only by the narrow dark line of the road, and dark spots on the mountain flanks where the little villages stand. Directly south was a precipitous wall of mountains, over which it seemed quite impossible to pass, and as far as we could see peak was piled upon peak.

Pillaged shops, smouldering ruins, and empty houses welcomed us to Ichtiman. Many of the largest buildings had been burned by the Turks, not a shop but was sacked and gutted, and very few of the inhabitants remained. Here we learned, much to our surprise, that the Turks had evacuated their positions in the Pass called Trajan's Gate, and were retreating southward pursued by the dragoons; also, that Weliaminoff's column had been fighting for a whole day north of Samakoff, driving the enemy from one little earthwork to another until he was stopped by the arrival of a messenger from the Turkish lines with the despatch from Constantinople about the armistice. The Turkish outposts had refused to fire, the men had approached and shaken hands with them, and the

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Turks had called them brothers, believing that peace was declared.

Such was our confirmation of the report of the armistice, and it was further strengthened by the appearance of Major Zéki, the chief of staff of Suleiman Pacha, who had come with a sealed despatch addressed to the Grand Duke, declaring also that an armistice had been agreed upon. General Weliaminoff had replied to the Turkish proposition for cessation of hostilities—"If you don't want to fight, leave Samakoff; for my men can't stay up here in the mountains," and the Turks quietly went away. The Russian field telegraph has been in use during the whole war only between points which have long been occupied, and never has been of the slightest service for the speedy transmission of messages from the front.

Although the Baba Konak Pass had been open ten days, the telegraph station still remained at Orkanieh, and from there, even before the messenger whom General Gourko had sent with the despatch about the armistice could have arrived, a courier came in with a message from the Grand Duke, saying that there were false rumours of an armistice, but that the army was to push on as rapidly as possible. The history of the fall of Shipka had been told us as we mounted in the early morning, and we had fertile subjects of conversation all day long; but after all that was said about armistice and peace there was to be no halt in the movement. It was rather an odd sight, the two Turkish dragoons who escorted Major Zéki, with their Winchester rifles slung on their backs, fraternizing with the Cossacks; and it puzzled the few Bulgarian spectators to see a Turkish bimbashi in full uniform, with his sword on, on easy terms with the Russian officers. We invited Major Zéki to dine in our mess, and we had a very jolly evening.

He had the frankness to say when he was served with plain boiled rice after the cabbage soup—"I had imagined the officers of the Russian army lived in much greater luxury."

Some one replied—"It is only by your kindness in leaving plenty of stores behind you that we have even these provisions."

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This was his first experience among the Russians, and I dare say from this little incident he understands what it was to be with a great army cut loose from its base of supplies, and began to understand the happy-go-lucky way the Russians have of doing everything.

A day or two later Major Zéki, who gained many friends from his sympathetic disposition and pleasant manner, received instructions from the Grand Duke to present the despatch, the contents of which had already been transmitted by wire, in person at the head-quarters in Kezanlik, whither he went with his two dragoons, escorted by an officer of the staff and two Cossacks, doubtless to the complete mystification of the people they met on the road. One thing Major Zéki remarked with a great deal of justice, that the Bulgarians treat the Russians with actual disrespect, and pay no regard whatever to their requests or demands, while to the Turks they are all attention. It was curious to observe how the natives sprang to wait upon the Turkish officer, even while he was in company with the Russians.

We literally scrambled all the way over the Trajan's Gate. The road which mounts the northern declivity in a succession of steep zig-zags was as smooth as a skating-rink. It was filled with infantry and artillery. Men slipped and slid, horses fell with their riders, the heavy caissons swung from one side of the road to the other, often in imminent danger of dragging the horses over the precipices. From the summit of the Pass the view is very wide, embracing the valleys of Ichtiman and Banja on one side, and a large portion of the Rhodope range of mountains to the south beyond the plain of Philippopolis.

I only remember the descent as a series of dangerous slides, and I was so much occupied with looking out for my own safety that I could pay no attention to the landscape. Occasionally the horses would slide for many yards, only bringing up against the bank on the side of the road or among the bushes. The limited supply of iron had obliged most of us to have the smooth flat plates used by the Turks put on instead of the European shoes, so our horses skated, awkwardly enough, wherever the ice was smooth. The cannon,

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which were hauled up by a double force of horses, were slid down with only the pole horses attached, and to increase the friction of the chained wheels, the soldiers attached to them rude shoes made out of bundles of large telegraph wire. But with every precaution against too great momentum, whenever one of the pieces came down a slope it carried everything before it. I heard of no accidents, but I do not see how they were avoided, for the heavy cannon and caissons were next to unmanageable in the icy path, and there were many narrow escapes that came under my notice. It was certainly a great relief when we came to the last declivity, for this was nearly free from ice; the whole landscape had indeed changed from an unbroken white to greyish-brown, for in the plain below and all over the southern slopes there were frequent patches of bare ground, and there had been evidently very much less snow in the district than north of the range.

As we rode through the village of Vejtrenova we came upon a collection of strange-looking houses, decidedly out of keeping with the surroundings, for they were at first sight quite foreign—I may say even American in aspect. Neatly constructed of planks unpainted, but with some little attempt at ornamentation, they are as far out of character with the rest of the architecture as a silk hat would be among the sheepskin caps of the natives. Still they looked invitingly clean, although not promising great warmth in comparison with mud walls and thatched roofs, and if they had not been well filled, I think we should have chosen our quarters there without hesitation. These are the houses which were built a year ago by the Rev. Dr. Long from funds subscribed in England and America to provide temporary shelter for those Bulgarian families whose houses were burned by the Turks, and they appear to serve their purpose very well indeed.

What a relief to the eye was the great valley after the narrow limits of a mountain horizon! From Vejtrenova the plain of Philippopolis stretched out invitingly before us far away eastward into the hazy distance, a broad open path between the irregular peaks of the lesser Balkans on the north, and the impassable heights of the great Rhodope range that cut

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out sharply with its snow-covered summits against the mild blue sky in the south. The road led away a straight black line over low hills at the base of the mountains toward the broad dark patch in the distance, whence rose straight into the still air three majestic columns of dark smoke.

The conflagration of Tatar-Bazardjik had begun. We had anxiously studied the village of Banja from the top of the Pass to find out, if possible, whether the retreating Turks had passed through it or not, but we could see no movement there, and were consequently not very much surprised to discover a black line of troops moving rapidly along the Simcina road towards Tatar-Bazardjik. No infantry had come up, we were in fact at the very outposts, so it was out of the question to attempt immediate pursuit, and we celebrated in rather a mild manner, for the material means of merrymaking were decidedly meagre, the Russian New Year's Eve. A distinguishing feature of the celebration was a mass conducted in General Gourko's headquarters by the priest of one of the regiments, the staff officers contributing the vocal music and sonorous responses. It was clear and frosty, and until long after midnight the cannon rattled and jolted heavily down the rough street, and the infantry tramped wearily past to find but little better halting-places in the plain than those who were obliged to bivouac away up the road in the Pass.

About half-way from Vejtrenova to Tatar-Bazardjik, the highway crosses a low hill, the last notable interruption of the level line of the road for many miles eastward, and this hill terminates in a rocky knoll two or three hundred feet above the plain. A more advantageous position to witness a battle could not be imagined, for the whole plain for miles lay below like a plan of the surface in black and white, and when at daybreak we saw the Turkish army drawn up in perfect battle order across the road between us and Tatar-Bazardjik, now burning in a dozen different places, we could scarcely wait for the infantry to get up; indeed it did not get up until after the firing began, for a couple of 9-pounders were sent down the road far in advance of the outposts, with only a

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handful of Kuban Cossacks as a support, and began to throw shrapnell into the group of Circassians gathered there.

The Kubans scattered out right and left, and trotted away to meet the Circassians, who were ready to welcome them. For a few moments there was a lively little fire, and then they began to stop and look at one another. The whole plain about Tatar-Bazardjik seemed alive with Turkish cavalry; large squads were moving here and there, long lines were filing off to the right and left; and besides these movements preparatory to receiving the expected attack the infantry strung out in long double lines of skirmishers.

The Russian infantry soon came over the hill in small detachments, marched right up to within gunshot of the Circassians, who hesitated and drew back at their approach, and then the riflemen lay down in the ditches. We saw little blue clouds of smoke arise, and it was evident that they were making themselves comfortable.

There we stood, watching the field all day long, while the dragoons made a wide detour to the left to try and reach the road beyond the town. The only break in the monotony of the day was the sending of a flag of truce into the Turkish lines with a letter which had been sent by Major Zéki to Suleiman Pacha. Prince Tzereteleff was chosen to carry the letter; and, accompanied by a trumpeter and a Cossack, who carried on his lance two handkerchiefs tied together by a corner, he rode down the road. As Tzereteleff had been fired on last summer near Kezanlik while on a similar mission, and had barely escaped being killed, we watched with great interest the little group draw nearer and nearer to the Turkish outposts until they were within a few rods, and then at last we saw three horsemen come out to meet them, and we knew that the Turks had learned at last to respect the white flag, or at least had chosen to respect it.

It was perfectly evident that this parade of force, and the open preparations for resisting an attack along the road, were only to cover the retreat of the army; and, just as we expected, by daybreak on the 14th the town was completely evacuated. The bridge on the road was broken but not seriously injured, but the one over the Maritza between the town and the

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railway station was entirely burned. Two or three wretched-looking Bulgarians fawned on us as we entered the city, but the streets were otherwise almost entirely deserted.

There is nothing more forlorn and desolate than a freshly plundered depopulated town, and Tatar-Bazardjik was a good example of what the Turkish soldiery can accomplish in one short night. The streets were barricaded with broken cases, shutters, and the confused *débris* of the shops. Every house was open and gutted. Bedding, groceries, furniture, small wares of all kinds fairly paved the streets leading toward the railway station. The bright sun shining through clouds of smoke from a hundred burning houses lighted the scene of destruction and devastation with a reddish glare, and here and there a dead body with pools of blood still fresh about it completed a perfect picture of war in its most dramatic aspect.

Before we had been in the town half an hour, the ox carts, with the household goods and families of the Bulgarian citizens, began to pour in from the fields, and on the other side of the river gathered a great crowd of fugitives waiting to be ferried back. The railway station was crowded, and thousands were swarming all about it, half wild with fright. The Turks had forced all the families to leave the town, probably with the intention of totally destroying the place by fire, and they were all hustled to the railway station; such as there was time to take were carried off, many were compelled to follow the army, and not a few took their own direction in the confusion, and were now returning when they heard of the Russian occupation.

I have no statistics of the amount of property destroyed in Tatar-Bazardjik, but I should judge that at least seventy-five houses were burned. Of course, the Bulgarians who have lost their homes take possession of the deserted Turkish dwellings, so they are comfortable enough for the present, and will not suffer. Some three-score prisoners were gathered up in the town, many of them wounded by the sabres of the advance guard of cavalry, who followed close on the heels of the retreating enemy. There was one rather amusing capture while we halted in the town.

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A priest of one of the regiments went into a house and had a fire lighted to make some tea. As the house was not entirely plundered he thought he might find some sugar in a cupboard near the fireplace, but instead of sugar he found a Turk with his rifle across his knees, curled up in the small space between the door and the wall. Mutual surprise and mutual fear! But the priest recovered first, and ordered the Turk to give himself up, which he promptly did. While he was drinking his sugarless tea, it occurred to the priest to look in another cupboard, and an exactly similar result followed, and he had the honour of turning over two prisoners to the guard.

That evening the camp fires of the retreating army blazed on the hill-sides beyond the railway, exactly opposite to our own and the Maritza, and perhaps a couple of miles of nice fields separated the two armies from one another. The night was bitterly cold, and a piercing wind was blowing, but it was decided that the river must be forded, so Count Schouvaloff crossed with several battalions of infantry, and started immediately in pursuit of the rear guard of the Turks, which was still moving on, followed by a long line of stragglers. The river was full of ice, and the current was so rapid that the men, breast deep in the water, could scarcely keep their feet. In their drenched and freezing garments they formed battalions on the right bank, and pushed on cheerfully after the enemy until late in the night, when they bivouacked in the village of Adakioj.

The columns of Schilden-Schuldner, Krüdener, and Weliaminoff had all descended into the plain during the day, the latter somewhat behind its assigned position, and the detachment of Count Schouvaloff, which was intended to be the central column, was now in reality leading. Although the Turkish army was so near, it was playing such an active game that it was extremely difficult to keep up with it. Of course General Gourko did not intend to attack it, because, as it was evidently demoralized, its end was certain, and it would have been foolish to sacrifice two or three thousand lives to accomplish a result which time would bring about. When Count Schouvaloff's detachment moved out of the village of

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Adakioj just before daybreak, prepared to follow the Turks, who were supposed to have fled in the night, it ran plump upon the enemy, quietly waiting there in position between Karatair and Kadikioj, admirably protected by a little stream which had cut a narrow but deep channel in the earth, quite impassable for any troops. Their right rested, as we learned about the same time in the morning, on the road in the village of Airanli, so that the hill behind Kadikioj was really the centre of their position. So then the object of Schouvaloff's movement was accomplished; the enemy had paused in his retreat, and the thing to do next was to keep him busy while a column had time enough to turn him by his right flank, thus blocking his retreat toward Philippopolis.

Count Schouvaloff got his men under such cover as the nature of the ground afforded, and began a lively demonstration, and a hot musketry fire was interchanged. Just about the time this began General Gourko, who had started away from the village of Konak Durankioj, where he had passed the night, long before daylight reached the point where the river and the road almost meet, very near the village of Airanli.

We were watching the smoke rise from Philippopolis, and the troops as they marched along the road, when three horsemen rode out of the grove upon the opposite bank of the river; one of them drew his revolver and deliberately fired it three times in our direction, and then turned and quietly trotted away, followed by the second, while the third remained there looking at us. He was dressed in the Circassian costume, and there was a brief moment of doubt whether he was not after all one of the scouts of Schouvaloff's column; but in an instant the Kuban Cossacks, who have an instinct for distinguishing the enemy, were kneeling along the bank and banging away at the Circassian. When the fire began he saluted, wheeled his horse around, and slowly retired, evidently caring no more for the buzzing of bullets than for the singing of so many mosquitoes. I imagined him chuckling all the time at the wild firing of the Russians, who certainly did not distinguish themselves on that occasion, although the mark was not half rifle shot away.

We now discovered that the village opposite was full of Turks,

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and we could see them clustered like bees about the houses there. It was a raw, blustering day, and it seemed a pity to order the men to wade the river, which was rushing along, covered with bits of floating ice ; but a ford was found a couple of hundred yards above our position, and a battalion waded across and got in and at work in a few moments.

General Gourko now, at the suggestion of Captain Scalon, of his staff, who is well known for his attention to the soldiers, ordered the dragoons of his escort to take the horses of the officers and carry the rest of the soldiers across the stream on horseback. When I rode down to give up my horse for this work the bullets were already falling fast. The road, which had been crowded a short time before, was now well cleared, a battery was at work a little further on, and the Turkish shells began to plough up the rice fields. I never felt more unprotected than when I walked back that 200 yards to the little knoll where we had partial shelter, not a tree or an irregularity of the ground between me and the muzzles of the Martinis pumping out the bullets like hail. The lead knocked up the snow all around me, and there was a buzzing in the air that made me involuntarily quicken my steps. The firing was not very heavy, but it was effective, for ten out of the sixty horses which carried over the last two battalions were wounded in the space of about an hour.

When these two battalions got into the village the music of the fight took a higher key, and there was a constant, ceaseless rattle all day long. There we stood and shivered through the forenoon, and starved out the afternoon until nearly dark, when my servant—a brave young Macedonian, who had drifted into my quarters in Sofia—came riding in perfect coolness along the road, now strewn with dead and wounded, and brought up eatables enough for a squadron. Late in the day General Schilden-Schuldner came up to consult with General Gourko, who had been for hours anxiously awaiting the arrival of the column entrusted to the former, which had been ordered early to cross the stream below us to make an attempt to turn the enemy's left. Hours were lost in waiting for this detachment, and at last, instead of the infantry, came the old General himself. But the delay was shortly

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ended, and the troops came past at quick step. One or two of the soldiers were wounded in sight of us, for the bullets were still flying about promiscuously, and the squadron of dragoons that was detailed to carry three battalions across the ford lost three or four horses and men during the passage. The entire loss of the day was about 300, a large proportion in Schouvaloff's command.

Krüdener's detachment, which had gone towards the town, had met with little resistance, but arriving on the bank of the Maritza found the bridge completely destroyed. A couple of old brass muzzle-loading cannon on the rocky hill in the centre of the town blazed away the whole day at the Russians, and there were a score or two of Turks sitting on the hill and firing lazily with little effect, and others in the streets. I believe the loss in Krüdener's column was only six, but not a man of his force got into the town.

The same squadron of dragoons of the Guard which I have mentioned above as having carried three battalions over the river returned to General Gourko, and Captain Bourago, who commanded the squadron, reported that the men were wet, hungry, and cold, the horses fatigued and without food, and asked for further orders.

"Go and join your regiment," said General Gourko.

"It is impossible to find the bivouac in the night, your Excellency," was the reply.

"Then, suppose you go in and occupy Philippopolis; you will find good lodgings there," suggested the General, more than half in jest.

"Is that your order?" eagerly asked the Captain.

"It is!" came promptly back in reply, and the Captain saluted, mounted quickly, and, forgetting fatigue and cold, led his squadron towards the zone of the enemy's bivouac fires all along the plain between the river and the mountains, and went away at a trot.

The adventures of this little band are worth relating. When they came within half a mile of the fires they halted, and scouts were sent forward to report on the probable number of the enemy, but they returned in the course of an hour with the news that the bivouac was empty, and that the fires were

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left burning to deceive the Russians. Then the squadron trotted away in the darkness towards the black mass of the lesser one of the two rocky hills that tower over Philippopolis —landmarks in the unbroken plain for many miles.

Near the town another bivouac barred the path—this time in a field enclosed by a ditch and bank of earth. Leaving the horses to be led in groups of six to a single man, Captain Bourago and the rest of his force reconnoitred on foot up to the bivouac, and peered over the wall to hear the last of the Turks go away in the distance. The fires were only deserted a few moments before the dragoons arrived. Mounting again, the dragoons, with the platoon of singers at their head, marched into the streets of Philippopolis, waking the inhabitants with the unaccustomed music. Everybody was of course surprised and delighted at the arrival of the Russians, and half the population turned out in their night-dresses.

One of the consuls met Captain Bourago, and begged him to enter his house and take a cup of tea. Over the tea he put the natural question.

"How many men are here?"

"Oh, very many—in fact, an immense force," was the reply.

"But I mean here in the city," repeated the consul.

"Why, we have got a whole squadron of dragoons!"

"Then, if you value your lives," said the consul, "you will lose no time in trying to escape, for you are surrounded on all sides."

With only a moment of hesitation, Bourago ordered his men to mount, and marched away towards the station, where the enemy was reported to be strongest.

It was now past midnight; the great piles of stores and several houses were burning at the station, and just beyond could be plainly distinguished by the light of the fires a great mass of Turkish soldiers in some disorder. In the same formation as before, the dragoons advanced with great precaution, and reached a ditch within short range, concealed themselves in it, and opened a scattering fire, cheering and shouting with all their might.

Volley after volley answered their fire, but the bullets passed

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over their heads, and they began to shoot with all possible rapidity, taking careful aim. The terrific fire of the Turks grew weaker and weaker, and finally melted away, and sounded further and further off. Now was the moment to charge, and the squadron mounted and went away at a gallop after 1,500 retreating Turks, sabreing those who did not immediately give themselves up, and capturing over fifty prisoners. Surrounding the burning station with a guard, Captain Bourago entered it, and found three consuls there with several of the railway employés, and learned that a short quarter of an hour before three Pachas were standing there, waiting for a supper to be prepared. I hardly need remark that the officers of the squadron enjoyed that supper. Count Rebender, who, with Lieutenant Pijoff, had been very active through the whole affair, was given a platoon to clear out the nest on the hill, which he did in short order, and the squadron slept in the town.

Philippopolis was in a frightful state. For just one week there had been a reign of the greatest confusion. On the 8th of the month a telegram was received from Suleiman Pacha, ordering the city to be evacuated of all its inhabitants, because he intended to burn it on the approach of the Russians. On the following day news came from the same source that an armistice of two months had been arranged. The Christian schools began again, and business was to some extent resumed, but only a few shops were opened for fear of the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks. The Turkish families continued to flee, transporting all their household effects to the station to be sent to Constantinople. Frequent trains were run, carrying thousands of passengers, loading the roofs, the steps, and even the buffers of the carriages with a living freight. Provisions were thrown away or sold for trifling sums. A yoke of oxen only brought one Turkish pound, a cow eight piastres, and a sheep four.

On the 10th of the month the last passenger train went away, and immense piles of goods and household effects still remained at the station. Orders came from the medical director at Constantinople to remove all the sick and wounded (numbering 850) to the station, to await a train

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which would be sent to carry them away; and this order was executed with as little stir as possible, for fear of augmenting the disorders. The consuls, English, French, Italian, Greek, and Austrian met and consulted about the best measures to protect the inhabitants, and decided to stay, and to pay no attention to the order to evacuate the town, which had been repeated. The Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks having begun promiscuous plundering as early as the 12th, the authorities in the Greek Church issued 150 muskets to the citizens of that nationality to protect themselves from the irregular soldiers; but of course there was no authority, civil or religious, which could stop plundering, or prevent incendiary fires. On the 14th, before daylight, the bazaar was in flames, and the Russian cavalry being near, the bridge was burned, to prevent it entering the town.

The story of the next day I have already told. I can give little idea of the condition of the town, even as we found it when we entered on the 16th; but it was a picture of ruin and destruction all along the streets where the shops were, and was smoking in a dozen places. It was rather a ridiculous sight to see a whole army corps wasting precious hours idly watching the smouldering timbers of the bridge, and the rushing, ice-choked stream that separated them from the opposite shore, where thousands of Bulgarians were frantically shouting and gesticulating. We rode down to the river bank and there halted, waiting for a small leaky boat that was coming across. I don't know whether it was in derision of the inaction of the soldiers, or whether it was due to the impulse of a half-cracked brain, that a sturdy Bulgarian stripped and plunged into the icy water, and half waded, half swam across to us, blowing like a porpoise. He had nothing particular to say, so he was wrapped up in a rug, and sent away to warm himself.

Prince Tzereteleff crossed over in the skiff to arrange about the bridge, and in a few moments there was a rope sent across, and a rude ferry established. Mr. Petline, the delegate of the Princess Imperial Red Cross Society, was the only engineer who happened to be present, and he undertook immediately the building of a solid structure out of railway iron and

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planks. The Bulgarians were in a state of the greatest excitement. We could see that most of them were armed, and those who came over in the skiff so far lost their heads as to rush down to the water's edge and take deliberate aim at Prince Tzereteleff, who was walking in his Circassian costume among the people on the opposite shore, and they would have fired if they had not been suddenly brought to their senses. We stood there feeling rather foolish, for this was the first time the Turks had taken the trouble to hinder our advance by burning a bridge, and the Bulgarians began to construct a foot-bridge on the bases of the piers, and a few enterprising boat-builders were hammering away in a lively manner on some scows they were making to serve as a ferry. We tried one ford, but several men got a ducking, and one horseman was swept down stream, and before long a shallower place was found, and we crossed with the ice knocking against our horses shoulders and the saddle flaps.

When Prince Tzereteleff came into the town, he found only two or three marauding soldiers there, for the dragoons were already off to new fields, and he constituted himself a special police force to stop pillaging until enough soldiers crossed to form a patrol. The flag of the Stafford House hospital was almost the first thing that attracted my attention after we had climbed the steep hill, where we had quarters assigned us. I found two of the Stafford House Committee men there, neither of them Englishmen, and two young English doctors in the Turkish service. The hospital was nearly full of wounded Turks, and all the available force was employed in bringing them up from the station, where they had been starving for days. Towards evening I was passing the hospital again, and I found they were about to send down some hard bread to the wounded at the station, but the servant who was to carry it was naturally enough afraid to go so far out of town in his Turkish costume, and the Red Crescent was little protection from marauders and brigands of either nationality; therefore they begged me to give him safe conduct, and we went off together, for there were very few soldiers in the town, and a guard was not at that moment available. It is a half-hour's walk from the hospital to the

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station, and when we arrived it was nearly dark. The wounded were huddled together in a temporary wooden building, without attendants, with neither food nor water; many of them had died of starvation and neglect, and the rest were in a miserable state altogether. The single word "ekmek" caused a general cry of joy. A hundred bony hands were stretched out, sunken eyes glittered with delight, those strong enough to move raised themselves on their elbows, and begged for a morsel. While the biscuit was circulating one after another of the poor wretches held out a water jug or a canteen, and I found there was not a drop of water in the place, and had not been all day.

I searched for some Bulgarians to press them into my service to bring water. Following the sound of wrangling and blows of axes I came upon a crowd of them who had got into the store-room of the hospital, where medicines in bulk and a few provisions, like rice and butter, were kept, and were smashing things right and left and fighting among themselves for the loot. They scattered when I came upon them in the twilight, but I halted there as many of them as I could surround and herded them into the hospital, loaded them with jugs and canteens, and started them for water.

There was considerable firing still going on at no great distance just in the direction of the spring, and the Bulgarians were not ambitious to distinguish themselves under fire, but having noticed the muzzle of an easy-acting revolver looking for some one in their vicinity they thought the safest plan was to bring the water, and did so in haste. But one of them had a half revenge later in the evening, or at least I suppose it was one of the crowd, for as I was passing an open space in the street I heard a splutter and a bang, and then a whiz close to my head, and it was evident that some one had sighted me with an old flint-lock. I did not find the fellow, and I thought it prudent not to make too careful a search for him, for there were probably a couple of horse pistols and a yataghan in his sash, and he had the advantage of being in ambush.

I have said that the firing was going on the first night we were in the town, and we heard at sunrise the cannon still boom-

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ing. The battle-field was not more than an hour's ride distant, and from a neighbouring mound the fight could be plainly seen. The Turks were firing from the vineyard terraces at the foot of the hills, and waves of musketry swept from one end of the line to the other. But the rifle fire was not the hottest where the sharpest work was going on, for the Turks charged impetuously down the slopes, and bayonets and sabres were crossed in hand-to-hand fight.

The Turks were fairly at bay, for after slipping away between the columns of Schilden-Schuldner and Weliaminoff they had halted completely exhausted on the hillsides south of the city. Dondeville had hurried up across the Maritza and flanked them on the right, Schouvaloff and Schilden-Schuldner were pushing them in front, and Weliaminoff was crowding them on the left. Behind them were the bleak mountains, on three sides of them an enterprising, fearless, tireless enemy, and they resisted in their last ditch with desperation, fighting like lions in their lairs.

Those three days of fighting were full of incidents of Homeric heroism on both sides. Egyptians, Arabs, and Turks faced certain death with grim glee, and the sturdy Muscovites gave up their lives without an instant of fear or hesitation. It is said that Fuad Pacha, the commander of the reinforcements from the Rasgrad army, who so skilfully conducted the retreat from Samakova, rushed upon the brigade of General Krasnoff at the head of his men. Becoming mixed up in the mêlée and separated from his escort he was surrounded, but refused to surrender, and defended himself so desperately that he put *hors de combat* seventeen of his assailants before he was cut in pieces himself. We had heard that the Pacha who commanded the army we were in pursuit of would die before he surrendered, and he had made good his word in a glorious manner.

The Turks found at last, after losing thirty cannon, for they had no practicable road for wheels behind them, that they must either disband and escape or be taken prisoners, and they chose the former alternative, and during the night of the 17th abandoned the twenty cannon which still remained to them, and dispersed in the mountains. They will undoubtedly

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find plenty to eat in the mountain villages, for the people in the district through which they will go are notoriously hostile to the Christians, and will doubtless give every assistance and protection to the fugitives. It is no longer an army, for it is without leader, has no supplies, no artillery, and no ammunition. If it holds together in large bands, if the battalion organization is not broken up, it may still do service further south; but out of demoralized, scattered, straggling masses it is very difficult to reorganize anything like an effective force, and the army may be considered as effectually broken up.

The inhabitants of Philippopolis are not yet free from apprehension that they may suffer from the Mussulman mountaineers, who are known to be active in revenge. The Consuls saved the city this time; but the people have not full confidence in the powers of the foreign agents in defending the place against the attack of the mountaineers if the Russians do not leave a large force of occupation.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE ADVANCE OF RADETSKY AND SKOBELEFF.

The Work of Twenty Days.—Kezanlik.—Arrival of Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha.—A Diplomatic Contest.—How Skobeleff and Gourko obtained Supplies.—Crowded State of the Shipka Pass.—The Capital of the Rose Country.—Movements of Skobeleff and Radetsky.—Plan and Objects of the Combined Operations.—Turkish Movements before the Fall of Shipka.—Number and Disposition of the Turkish Forces.—Effects of the Turkish Disaster at Shipka.—An Exciting Chase.—Hot Pursuit of the Remnant of Suleiman Pacha's Army.—A Severe Battle.—Heavy Losses of Russians and Turks.—Desperate Personal Encounters.—Route of Suleiman's Army.—The Three Heroes of the Campaign.—Distribution and Numbers of the Russian Forces.—Interview between the Grand Duke and Server and Namyk Pachas.—The Armistice Negotiations.—Anniversary of the Refusal of the Protocol by the Turks.—Occupation of Adrianople.—Skobeleff's Iron Discipline.—Flight of the Mussulman Population.—Arrival of Gourko in Advance of his Column.

It will have been seen that from the moment that the forces under the command of General Gourko in the Etropol Balkans were again in motion, the Turks had virtually abandoned the defence of Roumelia westward of Adrianople. Not only were they threatened by the Russian forces in this direction; the advance of the Servian army, which, under General Horvatovitch, invested Nisch, and before the close of the year had captured Ak Palanka and Pirot, after severe struggles, rendered resistance to the advance of the Russians still more hopeless. In like manner it soon became apparent that a large proportion of the Turkish forces which had lately been employed in attacking and holding in check the Russian Army of the Lom were to be withdrawn for the more urgent objects of the defence of the capital. The first token of this

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change of tactics was the sudden appearance of Suleiman Pacha at Constantinople with 10,000 troops hastily embarked at Varna. Further movements of a like kind followed, the object being to concentrate so much of the whole remaining strength of the Turkish armies as could be spared for that purpose at Adrianople. This retirement of the Turks was at once followed by the re-occupation of Elena and Slataritza by the forces under Prince Mirsky, while General Todleben, appointed to the command of the Army of the Lom (originally designated the Army of Rustchuk), undertook the investment of the Danubian fortresses. Meanwhile Skobeleff and Radetsky were accomplishing movements second only in rapidity, brilliancy, and importance to that of General Gourko.

On the 9th of January General Radetsky took possession of the Shipka Pass. The village of Shipka having been first captured, the Turkish army was taken in the rear and compelled to surrender. Thirty-two thousand prisoners surrendered to the Russians on this occasion after severe fighting. Among these were four Pachas; ninety-two guns were also captured, with ten colours. The Russian losses were very considerable, being two generals, one colonel, and one lieutenant-colonel, wounded; nineteen officers killed and 116 wounded; 1,103 men killed and 4,246 wounded—making a total of 5,464. These disasters, as subsequently proved, were fatal to Suleiman Pacha's plan of falling back upon Adrianople. That city was accordingly abandoned. As will be seen, it was occupied by General Skobeleff before this point was reached by the victorious army of General Gourko.

The subjoined letter is from a correspondent who was at this period in the neighbourhood of the operations described :—

† KEZANLIK, *January 19th.*—The Russian army has within the last twenty days developed an amount of energy, and shown a degree of activity for which nobody was prepared. The

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capture of Sofia by Gourko, Radetsky's victory at Shipka, with the capture and destruction of the Turkish army as completely as that of Plevna, the capture of Samakovo, Gourko's wonderfully rapid march from Sofia to Philippopolis, Skobeleff's equally rapid march from Shipka to the same place, where Suleiman Pacha was nearly surrounded, and captured, the occupation of Slivno and Yeni-Zagra, all have occurred within the last eighteen days.

Turkish resistance ended, as I predicted it would, at Plevna, with the defeat of Osman Pacha. While they may still make a stand at Bujuk Chekmejeh, before Constantinople, there is not another place this side where they can hope to offer any serious resistance to the Russian advance. The Russians have over the Balkans at this moment fourteen divisions, 125,000 men. It is not astonishing, therefore, that the Turks should endeavour either to gain time in order to see the result of the debates in Parliament, and if there is any hope of England interfering in their behalf at the last moment, or to really sue for peace and accept the terms dictated by Russia.

Server Pacha has arrived here to-day. He is accompanied by Namyk Pacha, a Turk of great consideration and importance. Namyk has occupied nearly every post of importance under the Government of the Porte. He has been Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and was Turkish Ambassador in Paris to Louis Philippe. They arrived here about four o'clock from Eski-Zagra, and it was the news of their coming which caused the Grand Duke to delay his departure yesterday for Philippopolis. They went immediately to the houses prepared for them, and negotiations will not be opened until to-morrow.

It is probably known that the Turks have been trying during the last two weeks to obtain an armistice by requests made at St. Petersburg, and also to the Grand Duke Nicholas. An armistice was flatly refused by the Russians, who informed them that it could not be granted, but that they would listen to overtures for peace. The Turks then asked what would be the conditions offered by the Russians, and were told that they would have to apply directly to the

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Grand Duke Nicholas. This accounts for the arrival of Server and Namyk Pachas. To-morrow will begin the diplomatic contest under somewhat peculiar circumstances, Russians as well as Turks being completely cut off from Russia and the outside world. Snowstorms have destroyed the lines in Russia, and in Bulgaria the line is working only as far as Gabrova.

As the great difficulty of the Russian army has hitherto been transport, military men will be curious to know how that difficulty has been overcome during this rapid forward movement. Evidently Gourko could not keep up his supplies from Roumania by way of Sofia over a difficult pass of the Balkans, without speaking of the impassibility of the Danube. Gourko found a considerable quantity of Turkish supplies in Sofia, which enabled him to start, and since that time has been living on the country. Skobeleff, since his passage of the Balkans, has likewise been living on the country. The Valley of Tundja is furnished with nothing, it is true, as nearly every village is burned, and the country is completely ravaged and destroyed, but the Valley of the Maritza seems inexhaustible. Skobeleff writes from Hermanli that he has plenty of food for his men and forage for his horses. It is probable the army will find plenty until the transport is in working order, which, from all appearances will not be soon. The Pass of Shipka is literally blocked. No supplies are coming over it. The Grand Duke's baggage has not yet arrived. The greater part of the officers of the staff crossed on foot, including General Hall, the head of the Grand Duke's household. The distance from Gabrova to Kezanlik is seven hours for a horse, but waggons take three or four days.

When I crossed the whole road was full of artillery and munition waggons working slowly through. Each gun had twelve horses and from twenty to fifty soldiers dragging at it. The northern slope is many feet deep with snow. The southern slope, which is very steep, and shorter than the northern, is a mass of ice, so that it takes as many men to hold the cannon back on this side and keep them from rolling over the precipices as it does to drag them forward on the other.

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In addition to this, although the temperature is only about freezing point at Gabrova and Kezanlik it is many degrees below in the Pass, and there seems to be a fearful snowstorm perpetually raging up there in the clouds. Snow fell so thick when I came over that at times I could not see a yard before me. Driven by a terribly icy wind, the snow froze into ice in my ears and nose. The eyebrows and beard were one mass of ice. Fortunately the houses constructed by Radetsky are still in good condition deep under the snow, and there is plenty of wood easily obtained. Nothing could be more curious than those little huts clinging to the mountain side, in many cases only discernible by the thin blue smoke rising out of the snow, drifting over them, and curved by the fierce winds into every curious and fantastic shape imaginable. Steps are cut in the snow every day, by which access is gained to them, and to many of them Radetsky's soldiers had constructed balustrades and handrails to prevent themselves being rolled down declivities by sudden gusts of wind. As these huts continually line the whole ascent, everybody finds shelter and fire without much difficulty. The only trouble is food. General Hall told me the Grand Duke's train left with food and forage for two days. Five days have passed and the train has not yet arrived. For my own part I managed to cross with horse, overcoat, blanket, and a pocket full of bread and cheese, and should myself have been badly off here, but that I fell among friends.

Kezanlik presents a very different appearance from what it did when I was here with Gourko in July. Then it was a smiling prosperous town, one of the most prosperous and beautiful in Bulgaria, the capital of the rose country, full of beautiful gardens and orchards, with streams of clear water running through all the streets. Now it is little better than a mass of ruins. It was partly burnt by Suleiman Pacha. When the Russians arrived not a soul was to be seen. The Turkish population fled during the late fight. The Bulgarians had fled; those who did not had been massacred last summer. They began to arrive with the Russians, and as the only thing left in the houses to steal was the windows, they commenced carrying those off with great promptitude.

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The result is that all the houses not instantly occupied by the Russians are windowless, and it is almost impossible to get lodgings, as rooms where the windows are not gone are without fireplaces, and those that have fireplaces are windowless.

There are several Turkish hospitals here, and I was glad to observe that the hospital attendants had not run away and abandoned the sick and wounded as at Plevna. I looked into several and found them comfortably warmed, with plenty of wood in the yards, though I do not know how they are off for food. There are twenty-one Austrian-Hungarian doctors and apothecaries here who have charge of the hospitals.

Kezanlik is completely ruined, and it will be years before it recovers its ancient prosperity. The same may be said of every town and village, from Slivno to Karlovo, including the latter place, the richest and most beautiful part of Bulgaria. All that escaped of the Bulgarian population fled north of the Balkans. The Turkish population has been gradually evacuating the country during the last two or three months, so that very few are left. Most have gone to Adrianople and Constantinople, and some to Philippopolis and throughout the Maritza Valley.

† KEZANLIK, *January 20th.*—The operations of the Russian armies since the capture of Sofia and the battle of Shipka have been as follows :—

Skobeleff, the second day after the battle, marched for Hermanli, the junction of the Philippopolis and Yamboli Railways, forty-five miles from Adrianople, with two divisions, the 16th, his own division, and its twin, the 39th of the Fourth Corps, together with two brigades of eight battalions of sharpshooters. Brigades of cavalry of the Third Division, under the command of General Kartsoff, marched upon Philippopolis by way of Kalofer and Karlovo. Radetzky's corps, to which the 15th Division has been added, followed Skobeleff as far as Eski-Zagra and marched upon Cirpan, east of Philippopolis, evidently with the intention of surrounding that place, in co-operation with the 3rd Division,

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marching by the Karlovo road; and also to cut off the Turks at Ichtiman defending that pass against General Gourko.

The Turks by this movement of Radetzky and Skobeleff would find the whole valley of the Maritza cut off behind them. In this way the retreating army of Sofia, as well as the Philippopolis forces, would have no escape but by throwing themselves into the Rhodope mountains, where there are no roads, and where they must inevitably lose their artillery and baggage, and be dispersed, in any case prevented from reaching Adrianople before Skobeleff, and reinforcing its garrison.

The plan has in great part succeeded, and although only about 3,000 prisoners were taken, a great part of the artillery seems to be captured, and the armies of Philippopolis and Sofia dispersed.

The Turkish movements before the fall of Shipka and after the fall of Sofia were as follows :—

The forces at Araba-Konak retreated upon Slatitza, evidently with the intention of defending the entrance to the valley of Tundja, and prevent General Gourko from turning the positions at Shipka. There were twenty-five tabors, probably 15,000 men. The army of Sofia fell back partly upon the Kaputchik defile, near Ichtiman, on the road from Sofia to Tatar-Bazardjik, but principally upon Samakova, south-east from Sofia. These dispositions evidently indicated the following plan :—

General Gourko would naturally advance upon the Kaputchik defile, attack it in front, and endeavour to turn it. The Turkish commander then evidently meant to attack General Gourko in the rear and flank with the bulk of his forces at Samakova. There were some fifty tabors at Sofia, about 30,000 men, of which only five tabors went to hold the defile, probably because it was expected that reinforcements would arrive from Philippopolis.

The plan was good enough, and might have given General Gourko some trouble. Samakova is a position against the mountains easily defended, and cannot be surrounded. It has a road to Philippopolis independent of the high road. General Gourko could not march upon Philippopolis with

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a strong Turkish force at Samakova in his rear, nor could he invest that place or take it without great sacrifice of men. Your Special Correspondent with General Gourko will undoubtedly send you full details of Gourko's operations. In the meantime I send the following narrative of the march upon Philippopolis, given me by Colonel Scalon, of the Grand Duke's staff, who accompanied General Gourko, and left Philippopolis a few hours after its capture, and arrived here yesterday.

This march of General Gourko, which ended in a hot pursuit of the Turks, resembles in rapidity of movement and swiftness of combination Grant's pursuit of Lee after the fall of Richmond, but was less successful, inasmuch as he did not succeed in capturing the Turkish army. It was, however, equally important in its consequences, as it seems to have resulted in the destruction and dispersion of that army. The march of General Gourko and that of General Skobeleff show what a Russian army can do when led by capable chiefs. General Gourko only remained in Sofia three days to rest his half-starved half-frozen soldiers. On January 7th he dispatched General Weliaminoff with part of the 31st Division of the Ninth Corps to Samakova; on January 9th, the second division of the Guard, under General Shouvaloff, towards Ichtiman; and the third division of the Guard, General Dondeville; the fifth division, and the rest of the thirty-first division of the Ninth Corps, General Krüdener, towards Slatitza; himself following Shouvaloff towards Ichtiman next day with Rauch's brigade of the first division.

General Weliaminoff found the Turks in strong positions around Samakova, and pushed a reconnaissance, in which he lost 150 men. Next day the Turks sent a flag of truce, saying they had orders from Constantinople to ask for an armistice. General Weliaminoff asked for instructions from General Gourko, who ordered him to attack instantly, but when Weliaminoff prepared to attack next day, he found that the Turks had disappeared. General Shouvaloff found the defile of Kaputchik abandoned, and Generals Krüdener and Dondeville found no Turks at Slatitza. The reason was evident.

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The Turkish Commander, instead of carrying out his well-conceived plan of defence, was obliged to fly by the terrible disaster of Shipka. General Skobeleff and General Radetzky were marching to the Valley of the Maritza to cut off his retreat and take him in the rear. Not a moment was to be lost if he ever hoped to reach Adrianople. He instantly began his retreat, and this is why Weliaminoff found the Turks had disappeared from Samakova.

Then began a most exciting chase. Weliaminoff started after the Turks, who were retreating by the road from Samakova to Philippopolis on the right bank of the Maritza along the foot of the Rhodope Mountains. General Gourko and General Shouvaloff pushed forward with the utmost speed along the road which descends into the valley of the Maritza between Ichtiman, Bazardjik, and Checheren, and continues along the left bank. The two armies once in the valley were part of the time in sight of each other, with Maritza between them, both making superhuman efforts, and breathless and exhausted with the chase.

General Gourko, before descending into the Maritza, after passing Ichtiman, had sent one regiment across the mountains between the two roads, to try and cut off the Turkish retreat, but this regiment only arrived in time to cut off about 300 men of the rear guard. When General Gourko arrived in the Maritza Valley the Turks were slightly ahead. When he arrived at Tatar-Bazardjik they were somewhere near Peshtere, the first burnt village visited by Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring after the Bulgarian massacres. The bridge near Tatar-Bazardjik was destroyed. Gourko's troops waded the Maritza with its ice-cold water up to their waists, and reached in sight of Tatar-Bazardjik on January 13, the fourth day after leaving Sofia. They found Tatar-Bazardjik about half burnt, and without stopping there pushed on towards Philippopolis. General Gourko reached Kadikoi, about ten miles from Philippopolis, on the 14th, and here found the Turks strongly entrenched in good positions, but they were not the Turks he was in pursuit of. They were a detachment Suleiman Pacha had sent here on purpose to delay General Gourko and gain time. In this he succeeded, for

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General Gourko was obliged to halt, reconnoitre, and prepare for attacking Kadikoi. In this way he lost twenty-four hours. Part of his troops turned Kadikoi, crossed the Maritza at Aranli, on the horses of the hussars, and were proceeding to attack Kadikoi in the rear, when the Turks precipitately abandoned their positions, and retired upon Demendere, which place the retreating army had then reached.

In the meantime Colonel Bourago, with a squadron of dragoons, had marched upon Philippopolis during the evening, reaching and occupying that place about eight o'clock on the 14th, Suleiman Pacha having left at three o'clock the same day for Demendere, to meet the retreating army.

The race had now become a close and exciting one. The Turks were on the road at the foot of the Rhodope mountains, the head of the army at Demendere, marching on Stanimaka, hotly pursued by General Weliaminoff. While preparing to take Kadikoi, General Gourko pushed forward the third division under General Dondeville to Philippopolis, which place he reached on the 15th, when, without halting, General Gourko threw this same division forward to Stanimaka by the road, with the object of heading off Suleiman at that place. General Shouvaloff, with the second division of the Guard, having occupied Kadikoi, pushed forward over the plain south of the railway and attacked the Turkish flank between Demendere and Stanimaka, while Weliaminoff came up and fell upon their rear; and Dondeville's advance guard of the third dragoons, under General Krasnoff, engaged the head of the retreating column, while the infantry hurried up.

A severe battle resulted, in which the Russians lost 800 men. The Turks left 4,000 dead and wounded on the field, and the Russians captured fifty Krupp guns, and took 3,000 prisoners. Some of the Turks fought with great fury. One Pacha in particular, whom the Russians tried to capture alive, fought with the desperation of a madman, and killed and wounded fifteen soldiers with his own hand by means of revolvers and his sabre, so that they had to kill him at last.

It is impossible to ascertain how much of Suleiman's army was caught here. He himself escaped, and it is probable that

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part of his men had already passed Stanimaka when Dondeville's advance guard reached that place. Part was dispersed and escaped into the mountains, and may be considered as lost. When we deduct losses from exhaustion, sickness, and stragglers, caused by rapid flight, the dispersion of part of his forces in the last battle, and 7,000 men accounted for by the Russians, Suleiman may be considered lucky if he escaped and reached Adrianople with 20,000 men out of 45,000 that were at Sofia and Philippopolis. It is doubtful if he will reach Adrianople with them at all. General Skobeleff reports from Hermanli a certain force on his right rear, south side, along the Maritza valley, at the foot of the Rhodope mountains; but this force he would easily head and prevent it from reaching Adrianople at all. The army of Suleiman may be considered as literally destroyed, almost as completely as that of Shipka.

Of the Turkish armies in Europe there now only remains that of the Quadrilateral, and whatever forces there may be in Adrianople, which cannot be many. New levies badly armed will be panic stricken, and will hardly defend Adrianople at all. There is now between the Russians and Constantinople only the wreck of Suleiman's army and whatever forces there may be in Adrianople, for I do not believe there are any troops at all in Constantinople.

This result, the destruction of three Turkish armies, the occupation of the whole country from Sofia to Adrianople, and from the Balkans to Rhodope, has been accomplished in a campaign of fifteen days. It has been as rapid as a transformation scene in a pantomime, and its results are disastrous beyond anything that can be imagined to the Ottoman Empire.

The heroes of the campaign are Generals Gourko, Radetzky, and Skobeleff, who have carried out operations that for difficulty of execution, rapidity of movement, and quickness of combination, have hardly ever been equalled. The Russians are on the flood-tide of success. Long-delayed victory has come at last, and I doubt whether there is any Turkish force between them and Constantinople sufficient to arrest them

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should they choose to celebrate a religious service in St. Sofia.

The Russian forces now over the Balkans are distributed as follows:—General Gourko—Three divisions of the Guard, the thirty-first and fifth Divisions of the Ninth Corps, at and about Philippopolis, except the second brigade of the first Division of the Guard, which is at Sofia. These, with two brigades of sharp-shooters, make eighty battalions. General Radetzky's corps, on the march somewhere between Philippopolis and Adrianople, to which the fifteenth Division had been added. Thirty-six battalions of the third Division, under Kartzoff, on the march towards Adrianople. Twelve battalions of the twenty-fourth Division at Slivno. Twelve battalions of Skobeleff's two divisions, with two brigades of sharpshooters, thirty-two battalions. Two divisions of grenadiers now crossing at Shipka, twenty-four battalions—in all two hundred and twenty battalions. I have no means of ascertaining the number of men in the battalions, but think six hundred will not be an over estimate, which will give 132,000 bayonets this side of the Balkans by the time this appears in print. In addition to this there is the cavalry and artillery, about the numbers of which I have no information. The cavalry has been considerably reduced by the death of the horses, and a great deal of the artillery is not yet over the Balkans. General Skobeleff is scantily supplied with artillery. Of Gourko's 400 guns he has only 100 with him, part having been left at Orkanieh and part left behind in his rapid pursuit. The artillery was found to be a very great check on rapid movement, and more trouble than it was worth.

† KEZANLIK, *January 20th.*—Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha paid a visit to the Grand Duke to-day, and remained talking an hour and a half. The Grand Duke returned the visit, and also remained a considerable time. Affairs were discussed in a general way; but nothing was done to open negotiations seriously, neither side evidently being in a hurry to begin. The Turks are willing to wait to see what the British Parliament will do. The Russians prefer to wait till Adrianople

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is taken before beginning. Nothing may be concluded, therefore, for several days.

Namyk Pacha, who is very old, seemed downcast and sad upon returning from his visit to the Grand Duke. Server Pacha, however, seemed gay, and chatted pleasantly with the officers who were with them. Their suite, composed of eighty followers and domestics, arrived to-day. It is said they bring, according to Oriental custom, immensely rich presents for the Grand Duke and staff.

† KEZANLIK, *January 20th*, 8 P.M.—Events are following each other with marvellous rapidity. A courier has just arrived from General Strukoff, of General Skobeleff's advance guard, with the startling and alarming news that the Turks at Adrianople have blown up their powder magazines, are burning their stores, and that the fire is extending into the town, which is in danger of conflagration and destruction. The greatest disorder prevails at night. The Turkish population is flying. General Strukoff learned this from a deputation of Bulgarians, Turks and Greek citizens, who begged the Russians to come and try and save the town from the flames. General Skobeleff has probably occupied Adrianople at the present moment. Nelidoff looks upon this event as very grave, and believes it is the precursor of a revolution or disorders at Constantinople, which will probably result in the arrival of the fleets of the whole of Europe, and a foreign occupation of Constantinople.

The Ottoman Empire is not only crumbling, but tumbling to pieces. The Conference at Constantinople closed just one year ago to-day. When it is remembered that the Turks, by accepting Ignatieff's Protocol, would have furnished Russia with the famous bridge over which to retreat, and thus averted the war, the madness of Turkey's friends in urging resistance can now be fully appreciated.

† KEZANLIK, *January 21st*.—Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha had a long interview to-day with the Grand Duke and M. Nelidoff, during which the question of peace was seriously discussed. When asked what conditions they expected, Namyk replied that they came to treat as conquered people,

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and would throw themselves on the generosity of the conqueror. He then reminded the Grand Duke in a very adroit and agreeable way of Alexander the Great and the Indian prince who, after being conquered, threw himself on Alexander's generosity, when the latter restored to him his kingdom, and concluded that the Grand Duke would not forget so noble an example. The Grand Duke expressed his deepest sympathy for a fallen foe, but could not, he feared, promise to be as generous as Alexander.

The Turkish Ambassadors have apparently full powers to treat and sign a peace, but events are following each other so rapidly that nothing will probably be decided till there is a halt and pause. The Russians very much fear disorders at Constantinople and the overthrow of the Sultan, which would be a signal for the wildest anarchy.

The Grand Duke starts for Adrianople on the 24th. It is likely nothing will be concluded till he reaches there. The Turkish Ambassadors are of course to follow; and if peace is to be made it will probably be made at Adrianople. As the Turks appear ready to accept the Russian conditions, there seems to be no reason why peace should not be signed within the next ten days. The Russian conditions are pretty well known —if not exactly, very nearly—and it is unnecessary to recapitulate them. I hear nothing as yet said of the Turkish fleet, and the Russians admit that the question of the Straits is for Europe to decide, not Turkey and Russia alone.

† ADRIANOPLE, *January 26th.*—I arrived here yesterday, and found Skobeleff already in quiet possession of this place, which, as I telegraphed you, had been hurriedly abandoned by the Turks. Eyoub Pacha was in command, and he had as nearly as can be ascertained fifteen or twenty thousand men. Adrianople is strongly fortified, and it would have given the Russians trouble had Suleiman been able to retreat here with his army and defend it, as he evidently intended to do. The fortifications, which were very elaborate, were constructed by Blum Pacha. They are very pretty, very correct, and at first sight appear far more scientific and thorough than the rough hurried works constructed by Osman around Plevna

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under the spur of necessity and danger. But the Russians who have examined them critically say that in spite of their prettiness and correctness, they are in reality far less skilfully made than those of Plevna, as by a man who knew war only in theory, not in practice. Good or bad, they have been rendered useless by the defeat of Shipka and by Gourko's and Skobeleff's rapid march upon Adrianople. No disasters occurred here. Fires caused by the explosion of the Turkish powder magazines were soon extinguished by the Russians, and the excitement and panic caused by the flight of the Turks passed away in a few hours. Perfect tranquillity and quiet now reign. Part of the Turkish population has fled and part remain in their homes in fear and trembling.

As Skobeleff maintains iron discipline among his troops, the Turkish population will not be molested as long as he remains here, but I will not answer for such good order when the rest of the army arrives. The town is besides full of Turkish refugees, who have fled from all parts of the Maritza valley, slowly and painfully making their way to Constantinople.

On the road between here and Hermanli I passed trains of thousands of waggons of the Turkish population, loaded down with men, women, children, and household effects, slowly, sorrowfully, moving forward, with crying children; old men and women of sixty or seventy hobbling along scarcely able to drag one foot after the other; for there is not room for all to ride in the over-laden carriages. Many are trudging through the cold mud barefoot. All are wet, cold, half-starved, wretched, miserable. There are thousands of them, and they are leaving their homes as they think, perhaps with only too much reason, for ever. Sad heart-rending spectacle! Some have supplies that will last them to Constantinople; others, I fear, have not, and the suffering and mortality among them will be terrible.

Now that the war is virtually over, and the calls upon English charity for the Turkish wounded will be less frequent, the friends of the Turks could not do better than organize some system of relief for the fugitives now arriving in Constantinople by thousands, and to aid them in returning to their homes as soon as the war is over. On my way from Kezanlik

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here, I found thirteen dead bodies on the roadside, of which seven were women, one a child. Two of the women had been shot, the men had sabre wounds, the child was starved or frozen to death, as were four or five men and women. But two women had evidently been robbed, violated, and then beaten to death, as their bruised blood-stained faces showed, presenting a horrible heart-rending spectacle. It is impossible to say whether the foul crime was committed by Bulgarians or Cossacks, probably the former.

Considering the thousands of fugitives overtaken and passed by the Russian army on their way here, pursuing and skirmishing with the Turkish troops, these cases cannot be considered numerous, and, except the two women mentioned, they were probably accidental. I thought they were horrible enough until my comrade, accompanying Gourko from Philippopolis here, told me of horrors he had seen on the road near Haskioi. Suleiman Pacha must be held responsible for this exodus of the Turkish population and its attendant miseries, as he ordered it, telling the population they would all be massacred by the Russians if they remained. The Bulgarians would undoubtedly have pillaged and robbed them to a certain extent, as the Turks had robbed and pillaged them last summer and the summer before, but this wholesale destruction of property, this terrible widespread misery and suffering, would have been avoided; for after all has been taken from a house that is worth carrying off, there still remains enough for the family to find the necessaries of life.

As regards the absence of disorder here during the time between the departure of the Turks and the arrival of the Russians, much must be attributed to the action on the part of the Consuls. They obtained from Eyoub Pacha seventy Turkish soldiers, who patrolled the streets until the arrival of the Russians had maintained order. When this was explained to Skobeleff he allowed these Turkish soldiers to depart without molestation. Next day after Skobeleff's arrival he sent a train to Hermanli, having captured the locomotive and several carriages, and also had the telegraph in working operation, having had foresight enough not to destroy the

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Turkish telegraphs, as the Russians have hitherto always done in the most complete manner.

Afternoon.—Gourko has just arrived, far in advance of his column, which cannot be here for two or three days yet. As he is Skobeleff's senior, he replaces Skobeleff in command of the place.

CHAPTER XIV.

FINAL STAGE OF GENERAL GOURKO'S MARCH.

The great Exodus Southward.—The Panic Stricken Mussulmans.—Departure from Philippopolis.—Harrowing Scenes on the Road.—Pillage of the Turks by the Bulgarians.—Fugitives from Plevna.—Five Months on the Road.—The Avenue of Death and Desolation.—Hermanli.—Desperate Resistance of Turks at Derbent.—Skobeleff's Cavalry in the Valley of the Maritza.—Scenes in Adrianople.—A Field for Philanthropy.—Turkish Hopes of English Intervention.—The English Colony in Constantinople.—Traditions of lavish Expenditure during the Crimean War.—Current of Opinion among the English Residents.—Sympathies of the Official Class and of Englishmen in the Turkish Service.—Spirit of the English Consuls.—Influence of English Opinion and Sympathies.—The Turks the Dupes of their Friends.

In the following letter, the Correspondent, who has accompanied General Gourko's Army since the departure from Dolny-Dubnik, on the 16th of November, brings to a close his narrative of that memorable expedition:—

+ ADRIANOPLE, *January 27th.*—Seventy miles of utter desolation, seventy long miles strewn with the household effects of many thousand families, seventy weary miles of a continuous, ghastly, sickening panorama of death in every form, and in its most terrible aspect—such is the road from Philippopolis to Hermanli. This route has been for many weeks the theatre of scenes, and here has been enacted a tragedy of

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such colossal proportions and horrible character, that it is quite impossible for any one who has not witnessed part of it to conceive in the most moderate degree the nature of the diabolical drama.

It was here that was assembled the great mass of the Turkish families that fled from the villages at the approach of the Russians. Fugitives from the entire territory from Plevna to Philippopolis were for weeks and even months endeavouring to make their way to Constantinople, the haven safe from the pursuit of the Muscovite. How many thousand families already gained the vicinity of Stamboul before the recent rapid advance of the Russians it is impossible to estimate. It is certain that the long trains of fugitives blocked all the roads of the Turkish retreat, and seriously hindered and even stopped the march of the troops. Ever since the investment of Plevna, and even before, there was a general exodus to the southward from all the towns threatened by Russia, and hundreds of trains concentrated by converging routes in the valley of the Maritza, the tide being naturally directed towards Constantinople. Never having found any Turkish families in any of the villages, it had been a long unanswered question what had become of the population; and now for the first time do we appreciate in part the sufferings of these people, and form some adequate idea of the multitude of Mussulman inhabitants who have fled panic-stricken before the Russians.

As we left behind us the rocky hills and picturesque city of Philippopolis on the morning of the 23rd, and rode eastward along the road, the first thing that met our eyes was a number of bodies of Turkish soldiers lying in the road crushed by the wheels of passing artillery, and trampled into the mud by the feet of many horses. Before we had gone half a dozen kilomètres the corpses of peasants, both Turkish and Bulgarian, were to be seen lying in the snow, and some of them had already been exposed to the weather for two or three weeks. Some had blood stains still fresh on their garments. Dead horses and cattle blocked the path at every few steps, averaging two to the distance between the telegraph posts; and as we went further and further away

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from the city the number rapidly increased, and hundreds of abandoned arabas stood in the road, and choked the ditches alongside.

The road, too narrow for the immense trains that had passed over it in hasty flight, was now supplemented by beaten tracks through the rice-fields on each side, and there were traces of bivouacs in the snow, which became more and more frequent as we proceeded, until these side paths were almost literally carpeted with the débris of camps, and our route lay between rows of dead animals, broken arabas, piles of rags and cast-off clothing, and human bodies, for thirty-five miles of the whole of the first day's ride.

Our mystification increased with every hour. We saw the bodies of Bulgarian peasants with terrible wounds in the head and neck, sometimes mutilated and disfigured; women and infants, children and old men, both Turkish and Bulgarian, fallen in the fields by the roadside, half buried in the snow, or lying in the pools of water. It seemed to have been one long battle between the peasants of both races, in which the dead were counted equally for each; but while many of the bodies bore marks of violence and showed ghastly wounds, the great proportion of the women and children were evidently frozen to death, for they lay on the snow as if asleep, with the flush of life still on their faces, and the pink skin of their feet and hands still unblanched. Side by side with these, many corpses of old men, full of dignity even in death, lay stark by the roadside, their white beards clotted with blood, and their helpless hands fallen upon their breasts. From the muddy water of the ditches tiny hands and feet stretched out, and baby faces half covered with snow looked out innocently and peacefully, with scarcely a sign of suffering on their features. Frozen at their mothers' breasts they were thrown down into the snow to lighten the burden of the poor creatures who were struggling along in mortal terror.

I say the mystification increased as we advanced, because it was impossible to see why Bulgarian and Turk should be frozen side by side, or why there had been such slaughter of both races. That peasants should be frozen to death was

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no more than could be expected in the severe weather, for they were travelling in miserable arabas, without food or shelter, and with half-starved oxen. Miles of these araba trains we passed on the road, human beings and household effects jumbled in promiscuously. Upon the jolting carts bedding and utensils were piled. Women and children upon donkeys and cattle followed alongside, and behind for miles was a long trail of wretched, weary, half-dead stragglers; old men and women bent double, crawling along with the aid of crutches or sticks; mothers with infants at their breasts, scarcely moving one foot before the other—all this after long months of flight, constant exposure, continuous dread of marauders, and the hated Muscovites. Never did I feel so utterly helpless as in the presence of this supreme misery. I watched a mother leading along a sick child of perhaps ten years, a mile or more behind one of these trains. The poor girl could with difficulty balance herself on her naked, half-frozen feet. Night was coming on, and the cold wind that chilled us in our warm clothing blew about the rags from the suffering creature, disclosing emaciated limbs and skeleton body. The mother was in quite as pitiable a condition. Her face and head alone were well wrapped up. The araba train was moving slowly out of sight on the distant hills. A night on the road meant death to both these unfortunates, and their straggling friends could give them no assistance, because they were for the most part in a similar state of misery. The mother dragged her little one along, fast losing patience as the darkness came on, and finally pushed the sick child into the snow by the roadside, and hurried on without looking behind her. This was one of a series of similar scenes that were enacted before our eyes.

Money would do them no good. Extra clothing we had none. Our food was on the pack-horses far behind, and what we had with us were scanty rations for the journey. Does it seem strange that at this time, together with an exhausting sense of hopelessness and complete helplessness that took possession of me, came conflicting emotions of keen sympathy with the Turks, both soldiers and peasants, as the weaker and losing party, and a certain hard-heartedness at the same

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time against them for what I knew them to be responsible for in the Bulgarian horrors? Here there were murdered Turks and Bulgarians side by side, and while my liveliest sympathies went easily with the refugees, whose sufferings were presented so dramatically in the cold and snow, yet I had an accurate recollection of the long trains of Bulgarian refugees, that I had seen in the intense heat of summer in the region north of the Balkans and on the barren hill-sides of the Dobrudscha; and shutting my eyes on the scenes before me, I could easily see vivid pictures of Bulgarians under similar conditions of misery and suffering. I had not answered the self-imposed question, which people most deserve sympathy? when we arrived at the village of Kurucesme, where we were to pass the night.

This town, as well as the three others we had passed on the road, was nothing but a collection of empty buildings and barnyards. Like the rest it had suffered first from the exodus of the fugitives, who had pillaged on all sides; next from the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, who had plundered and murdered; and last from the Russian cavalry, who had pretty well eaten the place bare. Few inhabitants remained in the village. All was despoiled. Even the priest, who always has something if there is anything in the town, lived between bare walls, had no carpets, rugs, bedding, or provisions.

The next morning, just as we were going away, the head of a long train of returning Turkish refugee families appeared in the main street of the village. Then followed a scene which is painful in the last degree to describe. The Bulgarians gathered on the side of the street in knots of three or four, and waited calmly until the miserable train had got well into the village, when from every direction the inhabitants pounced upon the exhausted, defenceless Turks, and began to carry off their household effects, and even the cattle from the carts.

One poor woman, leading an ass piled up with bedding, and a child on the top, found her property distributed among half a dozen stalwart ruffians in a twinkling, and the little infant on the ground in the mud. The old men and women

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clung to their only treasures, while the Bulgarians dragged them away. Children yelled with fright, and panic reigned, which started the slowly-moving caravan into a quick march. All this went on before General Gourko was out of sight of the town.

I happened to linger behind with Captain Soukhanoff, of the Hussars, and we formed ourselves into a special police force in an instant, and the Captain knocked one Bulgarian through the hedge, while I settled the business with another who was escaping with his plunder round the corner of a house. Soon several officers joined us, and the whips were plied with effect, scattering the crowds and recovering a great quantity of the stolen property. I must confess, however, that I could not, after the heat of indignation was past, blame the villagers so very much for their attack on the Turks; for the refugees, when they had passed through the village, had plundered on all sides, and as I rode out of the town I saw several bodies of Bulgarians in the rice fields, where they had been cut down in the recent massacre, which numbered 136 victims.

From this village to Haskioi the corpses were more numerous if anything than on the route of the day before. The village we passed was full of dead Turkish peasants, and on asking the Bulgarians who killed them, they replied with a great deal of effusion and fiendish pride :—

"We did it. We and our friends did it."

In Haskioi there were bodies of Turkish soldiers in the streets nearly buried under heaps of stones and bricks, suggesting that after being wounded and unable to move away, they had been stoned to death by the peasants; and here also were hundreds of Turkish families who, without arabas or beasts of burden, had taken shelter in the deserted houses.

I inquired of one of these families where they had come from, and they said that they left Plevna five months ago, and since that time they had been on the road, and for the past few weeks in a great camp, which we should find further on towards Hermanli. For many days they had been entirely without bread or even Indian corn, and had existed solely on the flesh of the cattle that fell on the road. I gave them all the bread I could get hold of, and they ate it like starved creatures,

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crying for joy. The grandmother, father, and mother, with an infant at the breast, and a small boy of ten years, had not a single shoe between them, and their only baggage consisted of a few old torn bedquilts, and a kettle to boil meat in. They were in great distress of mind, because the house they occupied did not belong to them, and not having any means of transport they were unable to proceed further until fine weather should begin. The only consolation I could give them was the assurance that they would receive nothing but kindness from the Russians, and would probably find their house in Plevna unburned.

At every step beyond Haskioi we met new and more horrifying scenes; man and wife lying side by side on the same blanket, with two children curled upon the snow near, all frozen dead; old men with their heads half cut off; some Bulgarians mutilated as only the Turks know how to mutilate, and on each side of the road, broad continuous bivouacs deserted in haste, strewn with household effects. For many miles we had been trampling in the mud, carpets, bedding, and clothing. Now the highway was literally paved with bundles, cushions, blankets, and every imaginable article of household use. Broken arabas, too, began to multiply, and as we approached the little village of Tirali, we saw in the distance, on either side of the road, a perfect forest of wheels, reaching to the river on the right, and spreading away up the hillsides on the left. Several dead Turkish soldiers, and one or two Russians, showed that there had been a little skirmish there; and we rode into the midst of the great deserted bivouac, the horses walking on rich carpets and soft draperies, all crushed and trampled in the mud.

The scene was at once so unique in its general aspect, so terribly impressive, so eloquent of suffering and disaster to innocent people, that I hesitate to attempt a description of it. Hundreds of acres were covered with household goods. All along the river bank, following the windings of the road, over the hill, and across the fields where the road makes a sharp turn, reached this bivouac, at least three miles in extent, and of varying width. Over this great tract the arabas were standing as closely as they could, with their oxen placed together.

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The frames of the carts were in most cases broken to pieces. Sick cattle wandered listlessly about among the wheels. Corpses of men, women, and children lay about near every araba, and the whole ground was carpeted with clothing. kitchen utensils, books, and bedding.

It was a pitiable sight to see an old, grey-bearded Turk lying with his open Koran beside him, splashed with blood from ghastly gashes in his bared throat. Bundles of rags and clothes nearly all held dead babies. Crowds of Bulgarians swarmed in this great Avenue of Death and Desolation, choosing the best of the carts, and carrying away great loads of copper vessels, which lay about in profusion, and mud-soiled bedding, with no more respect for the dead than for the rags they lay on. These scavengers would drive their carts across the heads of dead women and old men without even a glance of curiosity at the bodies.

I had given up counting the dead non-combatants early on the previous day, having reached the sum of 200, so I did not continue the enumeration on the day in question, but I should say that at least 500 lay in the bivouac; certainly no less than 15,000 carts had halted there, large as the number may seem, and at least 75,000 people had deserted the whole of their possessions and had run away, with only what they could carry in their hands. Sickened by the continuation of the ghastly panorama for so many hours, we rode on to Hermanli, not leaving the last of the horribly mutilated corpses until we reached the very edge of the village.

At Hermanli we learned for the first time the story of the bivouac. It seems that the advance of the cavalry had been checked at different villages on the roads by the very determined resistance of the armed population, who fought with fury. There were seven repetitions of the little scene which occurred near Philippopolis, where the inhabitants fled with the Turkish soldiers, and men and women fired volleys upon the Russians. At Derbent, a short distance on the road between Philippopolis and Hermanli, when the Russian cavalry entered after a sharp little skirmish, they were fired upon, and several killed and wounded, from a little stone house. All efforts to parley with the Turks concealed

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there resulted in loss of life, and at last, after several peasants had been shot in the attempt to persuade the inmates to surrender, cannon were brought to bear upon the house, and shells exploded inside, which set it on fire. The defenders were driven out, and advanced upon the mass of soldiers, firing as they came. Of course they were shot immediately. There were only three peasants in all who made this desperate resistance in their fortress. This incident shows the spirit that animated the Turks to resist the advance of the Russians, and the history of the great bivouac proves the extent and force of the panic which seized those who ran away.

When the Russian cavalry came in sight of the bivouac there were one or two battalions of Turkish infantry stationed there, as rearguard, but they dispersed and retired with little attempt at resistance, and a squadron was sent into the great assembly of waggons to find out what it was. They rode on without receiving a single shot until they were right alongside, and within a very few paces of the train of arabas occupying the road, when from behind these waggons, out from under the rude coverings, and from all sides came a rattling volley, which emptied some saddles. Then it became evident that ferocious resistance was to be made, so this squadron retired, and preparations were made to attack the collection of waggons, for it sheltered not only the rearguard, but also no one knew how many armed peasants; but before the attack began in earnest the panic caught in the bivouac and spread like wildfire. The immense band of refugees ran away with the soldiers to the mountains, leaving cattle, carts, and all their movables which they could not seize upon at the moment.

The cause of the panic was the appearance of Skobeleff's cavalry in the valley of the Maritza, in front of the bivouac. The result of it was doubtless the death of thousands upon thousands of Turkish peasants, who are now in the mountains without clothing or food. Still, another result of the flight is the enrichment of all the Bulgarians in the neighbourhood, for the smoke of the first firing had not cleared away when these ever-watchful individuals pounced down upon all the

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cattle the soldiers did not drive off, and carried away hundreds of carts laden with plunder.

This complete catastrophe is bewildering in its dimensions. Of the 75,000 people, only a few thousands with their arabas were turned back towards their homes by the Russians. I have told how we met them on the road. The rest escaped with foolish precipitation, following the impulses of unreasonable fear, easily comprehensible under the circumstances. Their fate is not yet known, but it may easily be conjectured. The route between Philippopolis and Hermanli should bear for all time the name of the Road of the Dead.

It is discouraging to believe that the scenes I have described may be repeated as we proceed towards Constantinople, for a short time ago long waggon trains of refugees passed through Adrianople on their way towards Stamboul, and filled the street here for weeks, day and night, with a slowly-moving caravan. When asked where they were going, very few of these people could answer. They only knew that they must get away as fast as possible, and they were so distracted with terror, that when their arabas broke down even in the streets of Adrianople, they left their baggage and hurried away without it. Many of these fugitives have been turned back by the Russian cavalry, and as I write the street is filled with arabas still moving along through the cold rain and darkness, most of the women on foot without shoes, every one completely drenched, half-starved, and exhausted.

The howling of the storm makes a wild accompaniment to the cries of infants and the screeching of the wheels as they pass. There is no hopes of any succour for these unfortunates. The small fund which remained in the hands of the Committee here charged with the relief of the suffering Turks has, I believe, been all distributed, either in money or in food and clothing, and there is nothing to do but to let these people struggle on to their villages as best they may. It is safe to prophesy that but a small proportion will ever reach their homes in this severe winter weather, and against the tide of the advancing army trains, and once in their villages they have neither food, nor money to buy any, if there be

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any to sell after the Russian army has passed. If peace be soon declared, and the present panic cease, there is still a gloomy future for these fugitives in a land where there is certain to be a scarcity of crops for lack of men and cattle to cultivate, and a promise of pestilence when the warm weather comes. The peculiar nature of the war has made it impossible to avert the partial ruin of the people where the armies have passed, but I believe the exodus of the Turkish population, which has resulted so disastrously, might have been easily prevented. The refugees might have been stopped as far back as Sofia if Suleiman Pacha had not ordered them on in advance of his army.

However, it is much easier to-day to blame than to find a source of relief for the sufferers. There is no better field for the philanthropist than European Turkey at the present time, and as the great needs of the refugees, both Bulgarian and Turkish, are bread and the common articles of food, the assistance may be direct and easily given.

The next letter throws some light upon the causes of the Turkish belief in English intervention :—

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *January* 12*th*.—I see that some of your contemporaries have been calling attention to the mischievous effect upon the Turks of the belief that, provided they will refuse terms of peace, England is bound to come to their aid. Your columns have repeatedly contained similar warnings. The special reason for calling attention to this evil at the present time arises out of the widespread rumour which I telegraphed to you a fortnight ago, that Mr. Layard had expressed an opinion similar to that mentioned above. About the existence of the rumour and its widespread character there can be no doubt whatever. But the belief in English aid is one which, as your readers will remember, I called attention to months before Mr. Layard came here. One of your contemporaries attributes it to Embassy gossip and the statements of members of the English colony who are "more philo-Turk than the Turks." At first sight what the English

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colony thinks and says is not of much importance. But as the Turks gather English opinion from it, its opinion has a certain value. As the question, moreover, has been raised of what that opinion is, it may be of interest to state it so far as I can.

The colony consists of Englishmen in Turkish employ, and of others who are engaged in business. It may be safely said that, as a rule, those belonging to the first-class are more philo-Turk than the Turks. As their bread depends upon the continued existence of Turkey, it would be remarkable if it were otherwise. Among those who are engaged in business there are, of course, a great number whose business binds their interests with that of the Turks, so that the number of Englishmen in Constantinople who are really independent, in the sense of having no interest in the maintenance of the Empire, and especially in its solvency, is exceedingly small. Bearing in mind this fact, it is astonishing how little philo-Turkism there is among this portion of the colony. Looking to their own interests alone there is hardly a man among them who would not be directly benefited by a war in which England should fight on the side of Turkey.

For the English colony in Constantinople the traditions of the Crimean war are traditions of lavish expenditure, of reckless waste of English money, and of glorious opportunities of making fortunes. In case of such a war there would be contracts to be made by the hundred, which, of course, Englishmen on the spot would have the best chance of getting; there would be speculations of various kinds with a certainty of profit to those who have local knowledge; ships to be chartered at high rates; money to be lent to the Turks to be squandered even more wildly than an English War Department can squander money in time of war, and plenty of jobbery and backsheesh where the money would slide into English banking accounts. It would be difficult to point out an English resident in Constantinople to whom a war with England on the side of Turkey would not be, or appear to be, a certain source of large additional gain.

Remembering these things, it would not be very surprising if the English colony were rabid philo-Turks. The fact is, how-

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ever, that the great majority of them are not. A thermometer might be made of philo-Turkism, at the warmest end of which the officials in Turkish employ would naturally figure, though it must be said to the credit of one or two of them that they would be very far down on the scale; and at the other end, below zero, would be those who have absolutely no interest one way or the other in the result of the present war. Among the non-officials an impartial observer would, I think, be struck with the absence of strong partizanship for the Turks. Notwithstanding that each of them would in the event of England's intervention be pretty certain of having what the Americans term a good time, the desire for English interference does not belong to the non-official members of the community.

If the hard-headed Scotchmen and North-countrymen who would inevitably, in case of English interference, make that little pile which they are waiting to make before they return to their native land, were asked why they are not in the number of philo-Turks, their answer would be something like this: "Putting aside the oppression which we know the Christians of the Empire have to undergo, the whole community, Moslem and Christian alike, is suffering, and has been suffering for years past, from intolerably bad government; there is crushing extortion, there are harassing exactions, entire want of security for property, and even of life. Land is going out of cultivation, whole villages have disappeared within the last twenty years, large tracts of land which once sent valuable crops to the market have ceased to be profitable. The roads in the country have not been improved, the condition of the people has become desperate. We merchants see our interest in a change of government forced upon the Turks which shall enable the large resources of the country to be developed, and certainly know too much of the sufferings of the people to sympathize with the selfish knot of pachas called the Government, which exists mainly to wring the utmost from all classes of the Sultan's subjects. In doing injury to Turkey they have done and are doing injury to us. To support the Turks means to support the oppression of the Turkish Government, and we," some of

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them would have a good right to add, "while we are and have been good friends to the poorer Turks, have every interest to sympathize with any change which will rid the territory or any part of it of this oppression."

Let it be said also that there are not a few in the English colony who would take the absurdly sentimental and narrow-minded view that in the Eastern Question right is on one side, and wrong on the other, and would put this question of right and wrong above the consideration of even British interests, or possibly their own fortunes. Such men are not philo-Turks, and not having Lord Beaconsfield's regard for British interests, or even their own interests, so closely at heart as they ought to have, can only be mentioned apologetically.

But it is obviously with the Englishmen in the Turkish service, and certainly the officials in the English service, that the Turks belonging to the governing class come mostly in contact. These, beyond a doubt, are as a rule more Turkish than the Turks, and their influence in representing English public opinion has been and is simply and purely mischievous. They wish that England should help Turkey. They lead themselves to believe that England means to help Turkey. They tell the Turks that England is going to help Turkey.

As a rule, officials who have been for a long time in a foreign service have forgotten the traditions of their native land, and those in Turkey have tried to believe, until quite recently, and still cling fondly to their faith, that we are in the period of the Crimean War. Englishmen who have been absent from their country for a number of years too often become Conservative in a sense which would be as offensive to Sir Stafford Northcote as to Mr. Gladstone, and it becomes unfortunate for the Turks that their information as to English opinion has to come from men who, in spite of facts, cannot be brought to believe that England has changed her mind since the Crimean days. It must be remembered also that the whole traditions of our consular service in Turkey are absolutely vicious.

It appears to be an article of belief with the provincial consuls that as the first duty of the English Ambassador is to pro-

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tect Turkey, nothing against the Turks will be acceptable at the Embassy. There wanted no inducement of this kind in Constantinople to make the Consuls pro-Turkish. Other causes help to do that in far too great a degree to be satisfactory. The Consul or Vice-Consul in his own jurisdiction is a considerable personage. A Consul in France or in Spain holds a greatly inferior position in popular estimation. In a Turkish province the Consul is on an equality with the governor of the town, has official relations with him and the other Turkish officials, is a sort of king over the subjects of the district in which he reigns, and has willingly granted to him a position which to a considerable extent cuts him off from association with the Christians. Of course it is to the interest of the governor and other officials to make everything pleasant to the English consul, and equally of course the consul is delighted with the gentlemanly Turk, and objects to the Greek or the Armenian, who is always giving him trouble.

If I were asked to name the most unreasoning and unreasonable philo-Turk whom it has been my lot to meet, I should probably name an English Consul in European Turkey. Without mentioning his name, I may take him as a specimen of the influences which surround a man in an official position in this country. I have never heard anything unfavourable of this particular consul. On the contrary, I believe him to be possessed of a good deal of kindness of heart. But he believes that it is a sin to say anything against the Turks. It is a crime to say anything in favour of the Christians. The name of Bulgarian, and probably of Greek too, stinks in his nostrils, and I should be surprised if he did not regard any one who rose against Turkish rule as rather worse than a Communist.

Yet the opinions thus held are, to a great extent, the result of circumstances, are prejudices rather than opinions deliberately formed. Take a very young man, possibly of Levantine origin, and therefore with an education almost necessarily defective, send him as assistant to some out-of-the-way place in Syria or Armenia, and change him to some other place say every five years—at the age of forty what kind of man is he

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likely to have become? The prejudices of the service will be exclusively philo-Turk; his pleasant experiences will be mostly derived from the Turks; his troubles, where he has had to inquire into some wearisome and stupid complaint of a Christian who has been injured in some way or other, will have come from the Christians. He will probably at forty have lost the habit of reading English newspapers, and will be more completely ignorant of English politics than hundreds of agricultural labourers in Devonshire; but in exchange will have got a firmly-rooted belief that English policy stands where it did when he began life, and will tell his Turkish friends that come what may, England, in spite of what the ambassador may say in his official despatches, is quite sure to come to their aid.

The firm faith of the Turks in English intervention, in so far as it is due to English opinion in Constantinople, is derived also from the opinions of English visitors. The Turks have certainly great reason to complain of the assurances which have been held out to them by certain English visitors. One man in particular, who spends a considerable time here, and whose great wealth enabled him to command access to all the Turks, is believed to have had a very large share in inducing the Government to reject the proposals of the Conference. It was openly stated at the time that he was using his utmost endeavours in this direction, and his exertions were strongly condemned by other Englishmen here of every shade of political opinion. Two visitors, both men of considerable position, were, a few weeks ago, at the Imperial Ministry of Marine, and similarly did their utmost to persuade Said Pacha that England would certainly come to the help of Turkey. It would seem that a number of men who come here think it polite to talk this kind of nonsense to the Turks, and that they cannot or will not see that to endeavour to persuade the Turks to continue the war is not merely mischievous, but is to lure them on to their destruction.

And now, while on the causes of the belief in English intervention, let me mention one more. The telegrams which have been sent from Europe during the last six months have almost always had a Turkish bias. In numberless instances the tele-

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grams have turned out to be more favourable to the Turks than the facts warranted. Poor Turk! He has been lured into the war and to its continuance, to his own dire injury, by those who were foolish enough to call themselves his friends.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RUSSIANS IN ADRIANOPLE.

Snow Storm in the Shipka Pass.—The Bulgarian Dogs.—A Child Victim.—The Lesser Balkans.—Eski-Zagra.—Colonel Polivanoff.—A Hospitable Reception.—Ized Bey.—Comfortable Lodgings.—A Luxurious Bath.—Comfort of the Turkish Dwellings.—Adrianople.—Arrival of the Grand Duke Nicholas.—The Peace Negotiation.—The Autonomy of Bulgaria refused by the Turks.—Continued Cruelties towards the Bulgarians.—Horrible Condition of Slivno.—Wholesale Hanging of the Inhabitants by Order of Suleiman Pacha.—Cruelty of Sadyk Bey.—Intercession of the Metropolitan.—Notable Bulgarians sent in Chains to Constantinople.—Exiled to Boli.—Feeling in Constantinople.—Approach of the English Fleet.—Admiral Hornby returns to Besika Bay.—Excitement of the Turks.—Hopes of English Intervention.—False Rumours.—Comments of the *Levant Herald*.—Discontent in Constantinople.—The Greek Refugees.—Ominous Signs.—Enormous Influx of Refugees.—Terrible Distress.—The International Committee.—Anxiety of the Ambassadors.

THE following letters complete the narrative of the rapid and decisive advance of the armies under Generals Radetsky and Skobeleff upon Adrianople.

† SKOBELEFF'S HEADQUARTERS, TCHATALDJA, *February 5th*.—It was snowing hard when I left Kezanlik, although the temperature was hardly below the freezing point, while a fearful snow-storm was raging in the Shipka Pass, where the mountains were enshrouded in clouds and storm. The wall of the Balkans rose up dark and threatening on my left, until lost in the lowering sky, and seemed to present a mysterious impassable barrier between the valley of the Tundja and Northern Bulgaria.

The valley, white with a light fall of snow, presented a very

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different spectacle when I passed along this same road with General Gourko last July. Then there was the noise of the tread of an army; clouds of dust and smoke covering and shadowing the green fields; the rattle of musketry; the booming of cannon; the din of battle; the hurry and excitement of one army fighting and pursuing another. Now all was silent and deserted almost as a graveyard. Skobeleff had swept over this road three days before, and left no stragglers and no trace of his passage, and the light snowfall had covered up his tracks. Anybody going along the road now would hardly suppose, without knowing it, that a whole army corps had just passed before him. There is no sign of life anywhere. No columns of blue smoke arising from the many villages that once covered the valley; nobody working in the fields; no waggons drawn by oxen plodding slowly along the roads; no cattle or sheep grazing in the fields. Silent, white, and cold is the broad valley; as dead and cold as many hundreds of its own inhabitants, whose houses are now buried indeed, but only by the snow.

I forgot; there is some sign of life, and that is those strange, savage animals, the Bulgarian dogs, half wolf, half dog, apparently, that may now be seen everywhere all over Bulgaria, living in the fields and along the roads, wandering about without masters and without homes in a wretched forlorn way that is striking. A dog without a master and without a shelter is scarcely a less forlorn and wretched being than a man without a house or a home. They live on the bodies of the cattle and horses that have fallen and died by the wayside, and sometimes on even finer fare! they seem to be half-way back on the road to a state of nature, and many will no doubt take to the mountains in the spring, herd together, and turn to wolves, which they already resemble. But they have not yet reached the stage of herding together. Two are never seen in company; they wander about in a lonely desolate way, slinking off at the approach of men, afraid of mankind and afraid of each other. They have their death list, too. One sees numbers of them dead along the road, some shot and speared by the

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Cossacks out of mere sport, others starved, or poisoned by the carrion on which they feed, the greater part frozen to death by the fierce storm in spite of their great fur coats.

The road was a sad and dreary one, marked as it was at every step by the bodies of dead dogs, dead horses, dead oxen—dead of hunger, of cold, of exhaustion, in every attitude of suffering, where the poor brutes struggled on to the last until they fell in their tracks under the cruel relentless loads that they carried. There were other dead, too. Once I came upon the body of a man lying prone in a ditch by the road with a fearful sabre gash in the head, and another time on the body of a child four or five years old lying in the snow with closed eyes and rosy face, as though asleep. The legs and feet were bare, and the attitude was so lifelike and so calm that I got down from my horse, thinking that it might not yet be dead. I laid my hand on the little face; it was hard, and cold as ice. There was no mark of violence, and it had evidently been frozen to death.

I found two or three villages that had not been burnt; they were Turkish, as the lattice windows of the houses indicated; but they were silent and deserted. Three hours' trot brought me into the Lesser Balkans, a low range of mountains that bound the Tundja Valley on the south. Here I overtook a number of fugitives trudging wearily along through the mud and snow. There were thirty or forty of them, men, women, and children, Bulgarians and Turks, going along together, on most neighbourly terms apparently, and all loaded with household effects—a coverlet or two, a pot or a frying pan, provisions, a bag of flour or rice, and other articles. Nearly every man and woman, in addition to other things, carried a child too young to walk, and even some of the children that were old enough to walk were being carried. I noticed one little girl in particular, who could have been scarcely more than ten, trudging sturdily and patiently along with a baby strapped on her back.

These people had come from Gabrova, where they had fled before the advance of Suleiman last summer, and they had crossed the Balkans, children and all, by that fearful Shipka Pass. If that little girl carried that babe over the Balkans,

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as seems probable, then neither Skobeleff nor Gourko need boast of their achievements. The little girl accomplished what was in comparison a more difficult task. They were all going to Eski-Zagra, to try and settle down again in their ruined homes, and probably little prepared for the ruin and devastation that awaited them there.

Eski-Zagra was one of those pretty Bulgarian towns of which there were a number on the southern side of the Balkans, like Slivno, Kezanlik, Karlova, flourishing and prosperous, that were the pride of the Bulgarians. It was about three-fourths Bulgarian and one-fourth Turkish, and with the exception of fifteen or twenty houses in the Turkish quarter it is now a heap of ruins. The Bulgarian part was fired by the Bashi-Bazouks and the Circassians, and the fire spreading to the Turkish quarter destroyed it likewise, even to the mosque. The houses were nearly all of that pretty airy construction of which the people in this country are so fond —half stone, half wood, with high, airy rooms, a multitude of windows, curious little nooks and corners turned into bay windows, balconies, porches, opening to the south, with gardens and courts, planted with fruit trees, through which flowed streams of clear cold water fresh from the springs of the Lesser Balkans. The clear fresh water still flows on, and one sees it bubbling forth from among the heaps of stones everywhere, and even out of the broken walls, showing that the finer houses had water appliances in nearly every room. The Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks must have obtained a rich booty here.

I called on Colonel Polivanoff, the commandant for the moment, who had already been here two or three days, to see what were the prospects of obtaining a lodging for the night in one of the few houses that remained. I found that I had just been preceded by two Turkish officers arriving from Constantinople with letters for Namyk and Server Pachas, at Kezanlik. We were all most cordially received by the kind-hearted old colonel, and treated to the best he had—some bread and cheese, a glass of cognac, a cup of coffee, and a cigar from the last row in the bottom of the box. The two Turkish officers were Ized Bey and Achmet Bey, and they

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both spoke French fluently. Ized is, as he informed us, the grandson of Fuad Pacha, and the brother-in-law of the Khedive of Egypt. He was very talkative and communicative, resembling a Parisian rather than a Turk in his manner, voice, and fluency of speech—altogether a very agreeable fellow. He did not seem to be much depressed by the misfortunes of his country, spoke freely of the ups and downs of the war, in which he seems to have taken a very active part, and appeared to regard it rather in the light of a highly-interesting game of chess in which his side lost. His manner, in short, formed a great contrast to that of Tefik Bey after the fall of Plevna.

I found lodgings in an abandoned Turkish house. Some Cossacks had just quitted the place and left a large wood fire burning in the chimney. What was my delight upon exploring the room I took possession of to find it opened into a miniature bath room, which I at first sight took for a cupboard or clothes-press, clean and dry and warm, with water in two large earthern jars set in the wall, and already heated by the fire in the chimney. A luxurious bath so handy as this, after a long day's ride through the snow and cold, is a thing not to be found anywhere else but in Turkey. There is no people in the world but the Turks who understand the art of living. A traveller may arrive tired, dust covered, and weary in the best hotels of Europe, after twenty-four hours in a smoke-begrimed railway-train, and ten chances to one the only appliance for a bath that he can find will be a hand-basin, with a quart of cold water, and he would hardly be better off in nine-tenths of the private houses.

Yet the owner of this house could hardly have been more than a simple peasant. The house was not even a fine one for this country. The walls were plastered with mud; the floor was of earth; the divans around the walls, now without cushion or rug, were of simple unpainted boards, loosely nailed up. The house itself, consisting of four rooms, and built of unhewn stones and unpainted wood, would be considered a disgrace and an eyesore in any village in England or France; and yet for comfort, for all sorts of ingenious appliances in snug little nooks and corners, that had been

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evidently carpeted and curtained, in closets and cupboards, curiously carved wooden shelves and niches let in the wall, the bath, the little balcony to which you ascend from the porch by three or four steps, and where you can sit and look out on the fruit trees in the court, and take your coffee and smoke your cigar or your narghili—everything so primitive in contrivance and construction, yet breathing a spirit of comfort and homely well-being not to be found in a European house that cost ten or twenty times the money.

I took my bath, made my tea, roasted a piece of mutton by the blazing wood fire in the chimney, supped, spread my blanket on the wooden divan, wrapped myself in a fur cloak, and stretched myself out to repose with the silence of the deserted house broken only by the sound of my horses comfortably crunching their hay outside my window, thought I had never been so well off in the best Paris hotel, and wondered where were the late inmates of the house, and where they were sleeping.

But there is no happiness without alloy. "There's a poison drop in man's purest cup." In spite of the warm bath and the blazing fire, the imprint of that icy little face was almost as distinct on my hand after five hours as when I touched it to see if it were not perhaps alive. My thoughts wandered forth to that frozen heath, and I saw the poor little form lying there in the snow and the darkness as plainly, more plainly even than if I had been on the spot—the rosy childish face and legs, the black and swollen feet. What a picture of childish suffering and despair! That poor little mite, abandoned, forgotten, lost by father and mother in the hurried flight, wandering on in the darkness and snow with that helpless look of fear and despair so heartrending in a child, until the little bare feet, frozen to ice, could go no more, falling in the snow, and freezing to death in the darkness of that desolate heath. And this is not one isolated case, there are hundreds of them.

† ADRIANOPLE, *January 27th.*—The Grand Duke Nicholas has just arrived, accompanied by the Turkish Ambassadors. The whole population turned out to meet him, and gave him a

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cordial reception, though not the noisy one which Tirnova gave him last year.

Nothing has yet been concluded with regard to peace negotiations, the Turkish delegates having refused to accept the Russian terms. The Grand Duke Nicholas and M. Nelidoff, as I informed you in my previous telegram, had no power to discuss conditions. They simply offered their terms, and gave the Turks the alternative of acceptance or refusal. After two days' negotiations the Turks decided to refuse, although the Grand Duke and M. Nelidoff used every argument to persuade them to accept, informing them that the march of the armies would be stopped the moment they consented, and that their refusal was the destruction of the Turkish Empire, which Russia had no wish to bring about.

They were informed that Adrianople and Philippopolis were taken, the army of Suleiman completely destroyed, and that the Russians would continue to march upon Constantinople unless they accepted.

Namyk Pacha exclaimed, "Well, then, if the Ottoman Empire must perish, let it perish by force. We will never sign our own death-warrant."

He was, however, induced to reconsider this decision, and he and Server Pacha asked two hours for reflection. At the end of this time they answered that they could not accept. The Grand Duke started the next day for Adrianople.

Both the Russians and the Turks decline to tell me the conditions, but I have been able to obtain them indirectly. As they are probably well known in Europe by this time, I will not state them in detail, but only refer to those parts more particularly requiring mention.

Although the Turks object more or less to all the conditions, the one which prevented the agreement was the Bulgarian autonomy. They were ready to yield every other point but this, which they consider equivalent to the destruction of the Turkish power in Europe. They were willing to grant autonomy, as provided for in the programme of the Conference. The Russians replied to this that the programme of the Conference was the minimum reduced to the most slender proportions in order to avoid war. As this object

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was not obtained, they must now demand a far more efficient kind of autonomy, something like that of Servia and Roumania, with Bulgaria extending very near Constantinople on one side, and to Salonica on the other. This is, of course, the extinction of Turkish power everywhere in Europe, except merely Constantinople. This they would not accept. They were willing to cede Kars and Erzeroum, willing to grant the complete independence of Roumania and Servia, the free passage of the Straits to the Russian fleet, and a war indemnity, but not the autonomy of Bulgaria.

It was just on this point the Russians were the most rigid. They left all the other questions for ulterior discussion, apparently recognizing the fact that all those questions concerned Europe, and not Russia and Turkey alone. On the one question of Bulgarian autonomy only were they inflexible. There was no question of the cession of the Turkish fleet, though of course that might arise in ulterior discussions on the question of a war indemnity. The whole course of the negotiations shows that although Russia wishes to conclude direct peace with Turkey, she considers that part of the conditions of that peace are to be afterwards discussed, and may be modified by Europe. These conditions are evidently a cession of territory in Asia, the question of the Straits, and a war indemnity. Although she means to force the Turks to consent to these things in principle, she expects to refer to Europe for their confirmation and application. In this way Russian diplomacy offers no hold to the English Government to seize as a pretext for war. Even Lord Beaconsfield will hardly attempt to go to war to prevent Bulgarian autonomy, the only question on which the Russians are inflexible.

† ADRIANOPLE, *January 28th.*—They have received as yet no answer from the Porte either accepting or refusing the Russian terms. This will, of course, necessitate a forward movement towards Constantinople on the part of the Russians. Until the Turks accept their conditions they must, of course, prosecute the campaign with unrelenting vigour. What complications this may result in it is of

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course impossible to foretell, but the Russians seem inclined to accept them, whatever they may be. If the Turks could have been induced to accept the Bulgarian autonomy, the Russians would undoubtedly have halted at Adrianople, as they are evidently willing to discuss all other questions in a conciliatory spirit. As it is, their cavalry is far on its way to Constantinople.

The letters below present a vivid picture of the persecutions of the Bulgarians by their oppressors, continued long after the exposure of the outrages which excited so strong a feeling throughout the civilized world:—

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *January 11th.*—Probably the report upon which Mr. Consul Blunt and others have been engaged for months with the object of making England believe that great atrocities have been committed by the Russians and Bulgarians will by this time have been published. It should be taken as the supreme effort which can be made to rake up every story telling in this direction. I have, of course, not seen the report, but anticipate that the great labour will have produced a very small mouse.

The truth is, all the talk about atrocities has been, during the last few months, a little stale and stupid. In 1876 the Moslem outrages in Bulgaria called down the indignation of England. They were proved beyond possibility of reasonable denial, and no effort of Mr. Layard or anybody else to throw doubt upon them can have the slightest hope of success. Thereupon the Turks took it into their heads that they could get a cry in their favour by alleging cruelties on the part of Russians and Bulgarians. They have gone hopelessly on trying to magnify trifles, and to persuade England that they are the innocent people, and their enemies the real doers of these iniquities. But they have so completely, so ludicrously failed that, in spite of their telegrams, their pamphlets, and other abortive attempts, I, for one, have never felt called upon to attempt a reply. Their charges often enough carried their own contradiction upon them. Now,

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however, the Turks have begun their old game, and during the last month have been ruthlessly hanging dozens of people because they were Bulgarians. The game in Bulgaria is very nearly played out, and if Englishmen knew what it was there would not be a hundredth part of the favourers of Turkey that now exist. The following letter, written from Slivno, tells its own tale, and could in all essential particulars be confirmed by every newspaper correspondent here. Let it speak for itself:—

"SLIVNO, *December 24th.*—The town presents a lamentable spectacle. More than 5,000 Bulgarian women and children from the devastated villages in the neighbourhood, naked and barefooted, are wandering through the town, begging alms and dying from hunger and from cold. The prisons are full of innocent Bulgarians, from the town as well as from the neighbouring villages, and almost every day about half a dozen of them are hanged.

"Since Suleiman Pacha passed through Slivno (toward the end of September) nearly 1,000 persons have been hanged in the midst of the town. When this general arrived there were many Bulgarians imprisoned for slight causes, who would have been kept for a short time in prison and set at liberty. But Suleiman, not satisfied with this, after he had hanged a great number of innocent villagers, commanded these Bulgarian prisoners to be hanged also. On the day on which he had to leave the town, in order to make his departure as triumphant as possible, he commanded to be hanged in the street through which he had to pass thirty-five Bulgarians at once. Such was the triumphant gate through which the famous general thought he ought to pass. . . .

"Suleiman Pacha departed, but with this the hangings did not cease. He found an able successor in the person of Sadyk Bey, the President of the Council of War in Slivno. This man, invested with unlimited power, perpetrates the most arbitrary acts; he hangs and arrests whomsoever he pleases. Among the imprisoned there are many natives of the town, honest and rich merchants, who never during their life have

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been imprisoned, and who, although innocent, only by giving large sums of money to Sadyk Bey have been able to save themselves from the gallows. The majority of the imprisoned Bulgarians are from the devastated villages in the neighbourhood, and though almost every day a number of them are hanged, new persons replace them, so that the prisons remain always full. Those who are condemned to be hanged are neither asked nor told their crime (because, in fact, they are innocent). They are simply told—'To-day you will be hanged,' and the sentence is immediately executed.

"I heard many of those innocent villagers, while being conveyed to the gallows, exclaim—'Is there no God to protect me from these butchers, who, without asking me a word, without telling me my fault, wish to kill me so unmercifully?'

"The inhabitants here, who became accustomed to hear such words, began to look upon the Divinity with horror, and even to become sceptical as to the existence of a Deity. 'If there were a God, they say, even if this God were of stone, he would hear the voices of the innocent who daily perish to satisfy the pleasure of a ruffian.' . . . . Taking in view that the majority of the persons daily hanged are villagers from the villages devastated by the Bashi-Bazouks, viz., from Yeni-Zagra, Omartchevo, Bouhalieh, Courodjieh, &c., the real cause of their hanging seems to be this:—The Government, which knows perfectly well the barbarous manner in which these villages were destroyed and the greater part of their inhabitants massacred by the Bashi-Bazouks, does not wish to leave living witnesses to tell in future the horrible tale.

"Last week our Metropolitan, Monsigneur Seraphim, touched, it seems, by the lamentation and weeping of women and children whose husbands and fathers were imprisoned, and before whom death was impending, resolved to go before the President of the Council of War, and to implore him to stop the hanging of the innocent people. This venerable old man presents himself before Sadyk Bey, falls on his knees before him, and with tears begs him to have mercy upon the innocent, and to put an end to the hangings. Sadyk Bey promises that he will not hang any more. This message, like an

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electric spark, was spread throughout the whole town, and cheered the hearts of the disappointed Christian population. But alas for him who believes the promise of the Turk! On the next day, in spite of the solemn promise of Sadyk Bey, ten persons were hanged in the midst of the town!

"On the 12th inst. the notable Bulgarians from the town, in number twenty-four persons, were arrested and thrown into prison, where they were kept three days, and then sent to Constantinople, chained together two by two by their hands, being told only that they had been called by the Sublime Porte, and from that time no one here knows what has happened to them. This incident has embittered still more the feelings of the people, because, they say, and justly, when such men, who enjoy the confidence of the whole population of the Sandjak, and of whom some are officers under the Government—when such men are imprisoned in the damp prisons, what hope remains for us? As it will be seen from the catalogue of their names, here enclosed, the majority of them have passed the age of sixty, and are men grown old in the service of the Government. Almost all of them, on several occasions, and especially lately, have contributed large sums of money for the support of the Turkish army, and to many of them the Government owes considerable sums of money. Such has been their zeal for the interests of the Government, that the young Bulgarian party of Slivno often used to call them Conservatives, and even Turkophiles. These men the Government ought to reward for the services they have done to it; but instead of this, it imprisons them in the damp prisons, and prepares for them the gallows. No one here knows positively the motive which has induced the Turkish Government to treat in so unjust a manner these notable Bulgarians (although many suppose it is for money); but that which is well known, is that they cannot be guilty of any other crime except that they are Bulgarians, and, moreover, Bulgarian notables."

The above-mentioned notable Bulgarians arrived in Constantinople on the 18th of December, and were confined in the damp prison of the Metirhaneh, where many of them became ill. As soon as the Bulgarian Exarch, Monseigneur

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Joseph, received the intelligence of their arrival, he went to the Grand Vizier, Edhem Pacha, to explain to him the position of these persons, and to beg him to set them at liberty. The Grand Vizier promised to do so. When thus their friends in Constantinople had been assured of their deliverance, the prisoners were immediately exiled to Boli (Asia Minor).

I saw these persons on the very day of their departure for Boli (25th of December), and learned from them the contents of the *teskerek* (or official order) with which they were sent from the Council of War at Adrianople to the Musteshar of the Zaptieh in Constantinople. It was to this effect, viz :—"As these persons are the principal and influential Bulgarians of Slivno, and as they are capable, by virtue of the influence which they exercise, to originate in future an insurrection, we send them to you to do with them what you know." It is not necessary to add, that the conclusion of this *teskereh* is a pure falsehood on the part of the Council of War, since it is impossible for it not to know that these persons are incapable of originating an insurrection or of being influenced by insurrectional ideas; but, on the contrary, it is quite sure that they would employ all their influence for the suppression of such schemes. Even supposing for a moment that the Government had really any suspicion that they were capable of originating an insurrection in future in that town, was it just to treat them in such a manner? Was it humane on that ground to send them to die in the prisons of the interior of Asia Minor? Was there any danger for the Government if it allowed them to live at least in Constantinople under sure guarantee? This proceeding cannot surprise those who know the programme of the Turkish Government. That programme is the annihilation of all intelligent, rich, learned, and influential Bulgarians. Whether it will attain its aim I doubt very much.

The following letter exhibits a pretty complete view of the state of affairs in Constantinople. The particulars of Admiral Hornby's entry into the Dardanelles and subsequent recall are too well known to require further explanation.

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:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *January 30th.*—I have seldom known circumstances under which it has been so difficult to obtain trustworthy information as it has been during the past fortnight to know what has been the truth about the progress of the negotiations for peace. Assertions have been confidently made one day at the Embassies and in the newspapers only to be contradicted the next. Just at the moment when everybody believed that the preliminaries of peace, undoubtedly accepted by the Sultan and his Council, had been signed by the Turkish delegates and the Grand Duke Nicholas, came the announcement that the English fleet had entered the Dardanelles. Nobody understood it, or could guess at what it meant. Its immediate effect was what might have been anticipated. The Turks everywhere believed that at last England was coming to their aid. It was expected by them that the fleet would come at once to the Bosphorus. Word was sent to the various Turkish police-stations to inform the neighbourhood that the fleet would arrive about ten at night, that a salute would be fired, and that nobody was to be alarmed at the firing. Then a few hours after came the tidings that the fleet had gone back again, and Turkish hopes fell accordingly.

It remains to be seen whether the hope thus held out will influence the negotiations. If the Turks are again deluded into the belief that we are going to fight for them when we are not, they will once more have to lay the blame upon Lord Beaconsfield. I entirely agree with my philo-Turkish friends, that but for his speeches and promises, official and unofficial, of support, and but for his having sent here an Ambassador, whose chief recommendation to the Turks was that he had always been a bitter opponent of Russia and a strong believer in the capacity of the Turk for good government, the Turks would never have been induced to enter upon the present war, or, having entered upon it, to have continued it until now. Unless England intends to fight, it is simply cruel to the Turks to do anything which can foster the belief that we are going to help them. Though not a single promise of aid may have been given to the Turks in any despatch, it is beyond question that the acts of our Government have led the

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Turks to believe we were going to fight for them. The fact, moreover, that a similar belief has prevailed at times in every Embassy or Legation at Constantinople is evidence that the Turks were not altogether unjustified in coming to such a conclusion.

Any one in this city who maintained that England had no intention of helping Turkey, that except in certain remote cases which were not likely to happen we should not fight Russia, and that judging of English public opinion from the leading newspapers, daily and weekly, especially taking those which, like *Punch* and others, are generally faithful barometers of English public opinion, England's determination was to remain at peace, was set down as a fanatic. England would change in a day when the Premier made up his mind for war, and people gravely whispered that official despatches were one thing, private arrangements another.

On the very day when the fleet came to the Dardanelles, it was reported that Austrian troops had crossed the border in order to attack the Russians. Thus in the midst of the negotiations by which they hoped to save Constantinople they were again liable to be deluded into the belief of foreign aid. There were others, I am bound to add, who believed that the fleet which appeared in the Dardanelles was probably only coming to protect the lives and property of foreign subjects. Had it really been coming with this object, and had it been made quite clear to the Turks that it was not coming either to help them or to oppose the Russians, it would have been welcomed by almost every one in Constantinople, the property-possessing portion of the Turks included. The local correspondent of the *Levant Herald*, writing from the Dardanelles on January 26, gives an account of the construction which was put upon the arrival of the fleet by the Turks. Of course if the fleet had not been sent to aid them, the delusion might soon have been dispelled :—

"Yesterday (Friday), a great state of excitement was aroused amongst the inhabitants of this town by the report of the approach of the British fleet. At half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, the ships appeared in the distance, and by 4 P.M. the imposing spectacle was afforded of the fine fleet of

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ten vessels nearing the narrows of the Straits. Crowds lined the shores on both sides of the Hellespont. The enthusiasm amongst the Turks was at its height. 'At last,' they said, 'the English are convinced the Russians are not fighting for the Bulgarian Christians, and are coming to help us.' The flagship of Vice-Admiral Hornby, the *Sultan*, was abreast the Castles of the Dardanelles, when a boat put off from the shore. Presently the fleet came to a standstill in midchannel, the ships blowing off steam. H.M.S. *Sultan* saluted the Turkish flag, and the salute was immediately returned by Fort Sultanieh—then, right about face, the whole of the vessels steamed outside the Straits again, whence they had so shortly before come. Disappointment was depicted on the faces of the Turks. That boat was supposed to have conveyed a telegram to counter-order the passage of the Dardanelles by the fleet, and that supposed telegram had an amount of imprecation invoked on its face fearful to contemplate."

The position in Constantinople is one of very considerable anxiety. This arises principally from three causes—the discontent of the Turks with their Government, the feeling of the Greek population, and the presence of certainly not less than a hundred thousand refugees. The discontent and clamour against the Government affects only the Turkish part of the population, but it is very widespread. The very women are clamouring against the Government which has sent their husbands and sons to fight against a Power which it was impossible single-handed to conquer. The privations which all classes among the Turks have had to suffer in consequence of the war, the non-payment of salaries, and the enormous drain of men from their population, combined with the ultimate failure which the Government has made, makes them peculiarly bitter in their complaints. It is evident, also, that some persons are intriguing to bring certain of the Ministers into discredit. The placards which have been fixed to the mosque walls make Mahmoud Damat the special object of attack. For many months past he has been persistently abused by almost everybody, Christian and Moslem alike, and the abuse has often been so unreasonable, even

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while made from several directions, that it is difficult not to believe that there is a party which is bent upon accomplishing his downfall. But the discontent has become general amongst the Turks against the Government rather than against any particular member, and were we living in ordinary times I should merely anticipate a Softa revolution and a change of Ministers.

Any political change, however, attempted by force at the present moment might lead to very dangerous consequences. The signal once given for violence might both literally and figuratively kindle flames which it would be difficult to extinguish. The ordinary population of Stamboul consists mainly of Turks and Greeks, among the latter being many thousand subjects of King George. The race and religious enmities of the two are never very deeply buried, and at the present moment the Turks are terribly and fearfully depressed. The Christian population is exultant. Of course the proposal to put arms into the hands of the latter, even in the capital, and for the purposes of forming a civic guard, has not been carried out. Three ornamental aides-de-camp have been chosen from among the Christians, but they represent the progress hitherto made in arming them. The Turks are unable to hide their depression, and it is difficult for the Christians not to show their exultation. The enormous emigration into the city has, moreover, largely added to the elements of danger.

The Greek refugees who have been brought from Bourgas and its neighbourhood tell a terrible tale of the outrages committed by the Circassians, and this tale loses nothing when spread abroad among the imaginative Greeks of the capital. As I have already telegraphed, this particular set of atrocities must be put to the credit, as far as I can learn, exclusively of the Circassians, who, not only in Bourgas but everywhere within the semicircle which the Russians are gradually narrowing around the capital, have robbed Turks, Greeks, and Bulgarians indiscriminately, though they are said to have spared the lives of the first. During the last three or four days the Circassians have been pouring into the capital, and the Government is either unable or unwilling to disarm them.

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I believe that the respectable portion of the Turkish population, by which I mean that portion which has anything to lose in case of riot, is almost as anxious that they should be disarmed as the Christians; but, unfortunately, the Govern- is too weak, or at the present time too distracted, to venture upon what would be at the present moment a difficult undertaking.

During the last few days I have been over in Stamboul, and have driven through the crowds of Circassians, Asia Minor Zeibeks, and provincial Turks, the great majority of whom carried a small armoury. Yesterday, it is said—and probably with truth—a number of Circassians arrived from Bourgas laden with plunder. Horses and other animals have been driven in by these men in great numbers, and are being sold at very cheap rates. An acquaintance of mine purchased two days ago from one of these robbers an excellent horse, with saddle and bridle complete, for three liras. The Turkish refugees that have come in are principally from Bulgaria, and by far the largest number have been brought in by the Adrianople railway.

An English officer who has just returned from Chorlow, the midway station between Constantinople and Adrianople, states that 110,000 refugees have passed from and through that station within the last ten days. The panic up there seems to have been fearful. Thirty thousand men, women, and children were encamped in and around Chorlow, waiting to be brought on by the trains. That they might not lose their chance they crowded about the station, and in hundreds of cases remained exposed to the snow and bitter weather during two days and nights. When the trains arrived the rush was frightful. Boards were placed on the couplings of the carriages, and these were immediately crowded with passengers. Many of the poor wretches had had little, and in some cases no food during the long and weary waiting in the cold for the train, being either unable to obtain it or unwilling, in their fear to lose the position they had taken up near the place where the train would arrive. The consequence was that hardly a train of refugees reached Constantinople without its tale of distress. Little children perished of hunger and

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of cold, and instances occurred of persons who were frozen to death. I have made inquiries which have convinced me that there have been terrible cases of this kind, but I have not yet heard it seriously asserted that the numbers of those who have perished thus on the way are great. Probably fifty would be an outside number. The number of deaths, however, represents a very small part of the suffering, and the specially sad feature of the latter is that it mostly falls on the women and children. While the one railway of Constantinople has thus been pouring in its passengers, every road leading to the capital has been crowded with the country waggons or arabas drawn by oxen, and with weary travellers on horseback and on foot, who are fleeing in wild confusion before the foe who are supposed to be in pursuit.

Let me remark here that it is difficult to understand why there should have been such a rush to the capital. The Turks themselves have come to understand that the Russians do not attack innocent villagers. One reason for the general stampede is to be found in the fact that the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks have driven off the Turks in order that they may have the opportunity of plundering the villages in their absence. Another is probably to be found in the fact that a large number of the Moslem refugees come from the neighbourhood of the villages and towns which were the scenes of the Moslem atrocities in Bulgaria.

Great efforts are being made here by all classes of the community, Christians and Turks, natives and foreigners, to grapple with the distress in which these refugees are found. The majority of them have nothing to eat and no money to buy food, and are wholly dependent upon charity. The Government is making use of the Moslem Civic Guard, composed mostly of men in the Turkish public offices, to distribute these refugees into different quarters and to provide them with food. The wealthy Greeks are behaving admirably. Not only do they give their assistance to the International Refugee Fund, the formation of which I telegraphed to you, and which is deserving of every confidence, but they have formed a committee of their own under the Patriarch, which is giving support to many thousands. The churches and the

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mosques are used for the reception of the refugees, and are nearly all required. Round about St. Sophia are crowds of Moslem women and children, who have been provided with shelter within its ancient walls and in the neighbouring outbuildings. The Greek Church of the Virgin contains a number of those who were brought down by the kindness of Captain Hammond, of the *Torch*, after the destruction of their homes by the Circassians near Bourgas. To provide the daily bread of the hundred thousand fugitives now in the city is not only an act of humanity but of safety.

As an act of humanity, it has been recognized by the representative of every foreign Government here.

The International Committee contains the consuls of each nation, all of whom, with one exception, were present at *its* first meeting. I believe that the German authorities here felt a natural hesitation in joining until they were convinced that the action proposed could not fairly be construed into one which would even look like opposition to Russia. As an act of safety, it is a wise precaution not to drive starving thousands to plunder for their bread. The Government has been shipping off many of the refugees to the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus and ports of the Marmora; but the work is slow, and up to the present time the exportations have been very few in comparison with the importations.

With these crowds of refugees in the city, the male portion consisting of some of the most lawless and brutal savages of the Empire, all of whom have arms in their hands, with the spoiler and the spoiled face to face, with the Greeks excited by the risings in Thessaly and Crete, the movement in Greece and the tale which is being told them of the doings of Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks about Bourgas and Rodosto, with the Greeks moreover exultant at the defeat of the Turks, and with a victorious army closing in upon us, and already half-way between the capital and Adrianople, it will be seen we have the elements necessary for a serious and grave disturbance. The Ambassadors have had to consider not merely political questions, but how best they can protect the lives and properties of their families and the subjects of their respective Governments.

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Up to the present time no one is able to say whether the Russians will come to Constantinople or not. The general impression is that they will. If they come, the Grand Duke, with a body guard, may pass through the city without opposition and by arrangement, or the Russians may seriously propose to capture the city. The accounts are very conflicting as to the likelihood of a successful resistance being made on the lines between Lake Dercos and Bujuk Chekmejeh. With a sufficient number of men, and assuming the earthworks to be in good order, a prolonged, and probably, therefore, a successful resistance might be made. But the length of the lines is so great that they could be taken unless the Turks are able to put into the field a large body of men. Whether we are about to have a siege will probably be known to your readers when this letter comes under their notice.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAR IN ARMENIA.

Quiet in Erzeroum.—An Alarm.—Unlucky Mistake.—Funeral of an English Surgeon.—Prevalence of Typhoid Fever.—Frost and Snow.—The Garrison of Erzeroum.—Saved by Fate.—Dearness of Provisions.—False News.—A Caravan from Persia.—The Russian Positions.—Capture of Turkish Cavalry.—Sufferings of Troops from Cold.—Scarcity of Firewood.—A Russian Proclamation.—Surroundings of Erzeroum.—Causes of the Russian Inaction.—Difficulties of Transport.—Insufficiency of the Russian Force.—Existence without Fuel.—The British Consul ordered to quit Erzeroum—A Wilderness of Driving Snow.—Muhir Ali Wounded.—Departure of Mukhtar Pacha for Constantinople.—Expected Russian Attack.—Mukhtar's Successor.—Erzeroum a huge Hospital.—Alleged Cruelty to Turkish Prisoners at Kars.—Illidge.—Mehemet Pacha.—Cavalry Demonstrations.—Hopelessness of the Defence.—A Lapland-like Scene.—Chased out by the Cossacks.—Evacuation of Illidge—Edhem Pacha.—Aschkale.—Want of Confidence in Ismail Pacha.—Armenia Abandoned to the Russians.—Sir Arnold Kemball Reconnoitres.—Ascent of Mountain Range.—The Turkish Soldier in Sickness.—Evrek.—The Remnant of a Turkish Army.—The Russians in Possession of the Kop Range.—Suspension of the Postal Service.—The Banner of Omar.—An Explanation.—The Executions at Kars.—Gumuschane.—Erzeroum completely Blocked.—Turkish Policy.—Death of an English Volunteer.

SINCE the fall of Kars on the 18th of November, or, at least, from the date of the failure of the Russian attack upon the defences of Erzeroum, the campaign in Asia had practically ceased to exercise any influence over the great issues at stake in the war. The severe weather had, moreover, proved a more serious obstacle to active military operations in Armenia than it had been found to be even in the mountain passes of the Balkans. Nevertheless, it is of interest to glance at the position of affairs in Asia, for which purpose the suspension of the war in European Turkey affords a convenient opportunity.

The two following letters are from a correspondent who passed some weeks in Erzeroum during the investment:—

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§§ ERZEROUM, *November 29th.*—Since the 9th inst. everything has been comparatively quiet here. The townspeople have re-opened their shops, and business goes on as usual. Excepting for the great number of soldiers one meets daily in the streets, it would be difficult to imagine a foreign army within three miles of the town. The fall of Kars is now generally known. The late Turkish commander there, Hussein Havni Pacha, with some troops, came here *viâ* Olti on Tuesday last, having escaped during the *mêlée* which followed the assault. It is reported that two Russian battalions, dressed in Turkish uniform, entered one of the principal forts at early dawn on the 19th, and when they got in showed their true colours, and made prisoners of the garrison. I much doubt the truth of this statement, and think it is circulated by the Turks to hide the shame of their defeat.

On the 12th, about 8 o'clock at night, we were all surprised to hear firing. On going to the top of the house we found the firing extended all round the earthworks. It was pitch dark, impossible to distinguish anything at ten yards' distance, and raining in torrents as it can only rain in Eastern countries. The cannonade was kept up for an hour, when it ceased amid great cheering from people in the forts and earthworks. We remained in suspense till morning, when we heard the cause of the alarm. About 150 Russian cavalry with two mountain guns were reconnoitring when they were met by the Turkish outposts, who immediately rushed back and reported that the whole Russian army was coming to attack. The enemy did fire a few shots which came close to the town, and also sent up two or three rockets, and for a minute or so gave a view of affairs. But the Turks fired in all directions, some shells going right across the town.

They also were unfortunate enough to shoot about 100 of their own men who, alarmed by the firing, came back from their posts; those that escaped only managed to do so by getting off their horses, and crawling up to their comrades on their hands and knees. The cheering was, I suppose, to show the Russians that they were not to be caught napping even on a wet stormy night. On Tuesday morning last there was a slight cavalry skirmish, in which three Turks were killed

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and one wounded; the rest rode back as fast as their horses could carry them to their different khans in the town.

On the 21st, Dr. Ryan, Stafford House Committee, with Dr. Woods, one of Lord Blantyre's staff of surgeons, accompanied by Mr. Harvey and Captain Morriseau, volunteers for ambulance service, arrived here from Constantinople. They brought a large quantity of medical stores, &c., for the wounded. They immediately, by the aid of Mr. Zohrab, got charge of a large khan containing about 300 beds, and are hard at work among the wounded. The five English surgeons here have now 450 wounded under their care, and this number may at any time be doubled, as an attack is expected before a week. At present there are about 3,000 wounded and sick in the different hospitals and khans. I am sorry to have to record the death of one of Lord Blantyre's staff here, another victim to devotion and hard work.

Dr. W. Guppy died on the morning of the 17th instant from typhoid fever. He had been working hard at the English hospital for three months, and after the attack on the 9th was kept for about a week doing from eight to ten hours' work a day. His funeral was attended by a good many of the Turkish doctors and surgeons, among them being Eusuf Bey, the P.M.O., and a company of soldiers were sent by Mukhtar Pacha, who marched with reversed arms to the Protestant graveyard, where the service was read by Mr. Cole, American missionary. On his coffin was laid the British flag and the Red Crescent badge, which he had worn both on the field at Deve-Boyun and during the attack of the 9th inst.

Mr. Zohrab, her Majesty's able representative here, has thoroughly identified himself with the English doctors. He acts as treasurer for both hospitals, has a store from which he distributes clothes, &c., to the wounded, and notwithstanding his already heavy duties, is always ready to render aid by his presence and advice. Without him, indeed, they would have much trouble with the authorities. But as he is quite up to the manners and customs of the Turk, he arranges affairs much more satisfactorily than would otherwise be the case. His well-known hospitality also renders

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the position of the English here much less irksome than one could imagine, being so far from a civilized place. Not only do the English appreciate his uprightness, but Austrians, Armenians, and Turks all come to him with their grievances.

I am sorry to say the health of the town is very bad—typhoid fever is prevalent; but this can hardly be wondered at, when one walks through the streets and sees the dead bodies of horses and bullocks lying about on all sides, and even in the watercourses, from which numbers of people are compelled to take their household supply of water. Were it not for the dogs, who are the only scavengers, I fear things would be much worse. There are no such places as slaughter-houses, and it is no uncommon sight—a man killing a sheep or heifer just in front of his house and leaving all the offal in the street. Happily, the hard frost and snow which we have lately had, and which is sure to continue for some four or five months, will for a time lessen the evil; but it is hard to predict anything but sickness and fever once it melts. Last night snow fell to the depth of about a foot, and many of the narrow streets are quite blocked up, as every one was employed at early morning in throwing it off the roofs. Both the Turkish and Russian soldiers must suffer terribly from cold, for in the mountains where the latter are, there must be at least two feet or more. The days are, as a rule, bright and warm in the sun, but the nights bitterly cold. The thermometer now, 11.30 P.M., being only eight degrees above zero, and probably it will be much lower in the morning.

The garrison here is now pretty strong, consisting of about 33,000 men, a good many of them being fresh from Constantinople, and certainly of very fine physique. Their endurance and bravery remain to be seen. Two battalions are at Illidge, about nine miles away, and will probably arrive to-morrow. Phasir Pacha (General Kholman), of Zewin fame, started for Constantinople last week; the poor old fellow could hardly be expected to remain in this cold climate during the winter. I may add that he is seventy-nine years of age, and got hit by a spent bullet on the shoulder during the fight at Deve-Boyun on the 4th instant. He had been in command there till the arrival of Mukhtar

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Pacha from Kars, and was always busy among the soldiers, having batteries placed, and encouraging the men in every way.

Fourteen men were condemned to be shot a short time ago for cowardice in the field. They were placed in a row, and a company told off to shoot them, but after the first volley three were found to be only wounded, so they were brought to the hospital to be cured, if possible—they had run their chance, and, according to Turkish religion, Fate saved them, and most likely when well enough will be drafted back to their regiment, if it happens to exist at the time.

The prices of everything have risen nearly 100 per cent. during the past month, and firewood is likely to be still dearer, as a much smaller quantity than usual was brought in by the natives in autumn. Barley also is very scarce, and the cavalry horses already show signs of hard work and little fare if I except the 300 which came from Kars with Hussein Havni Pacha. They certainly are very fine horses, and in splendid condition.

§§ *December 1st.*—There was a slight skirmish to-day, but without any importance. A Persian who came through the Russian camp reports that the troops are all being brought forward to the Deve-Boyun Camp from the villages, so an attack is imminent. General Sir A. Kemball is at Pernacaban, about forty-two miles away, with his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Dougal, R.N. Captain M'Calmont is at Trebizond, and Captain Trotter at Batoum.

I was rather amused to see in an English provincial paper of the 8th of November a telegram taken from the *Morning Post* saying that Erzeroum had fallen, and that Ghazi Mukhtar Pacha had retired on Erzingan and Baiburt, where he expected to receive large reinforcements and supplies.

At the beginning of this week a caravan of camels from Persia was passed through the Russian lines. When it came to the camp the head man was asked what his goods consisted of, and was told carpets, and that they were consigned to an agent here to be forwarded to England. They (the Russians) took three or four carpets and gave the man a note to the agent,

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saying they hoped he would not charge too much, and that they would pay him in a few days when they came to Erzeroum. The weather is fine, but very cold. This morning the thermometer was only four deg. above zero.

§§ Erzeroum, *December 7th.*—I hear on the best authority that there are now between this and Hassan-Kalé, a distance of about eighteen miles, eighty-six battalions of Russians. How they manage on the bleak hills it is impossible to say; but I have heard from Armenians, whose villages they have visited, that they take what they require and pay well for it. The Armenians are glad to work for them, seeing the prospect of a little money, and notwithstanding the intense cold bring wood, tezek, and other necessaries to the camp. The Russian tents are either double or covered with thick felt, and are supplied with small portable stoves. General Loris Melikoff came from Hassan-Kalé to the camp at the Deve-Boyun a few days ago, but whether he remained or not I cannot say.

Ghazi Mukhtar Pacha suffered a severe loss on Wednesday, when, owing to a dense fog, 217 of his best cavalry were surrounded and taken prisoners. A few, whose horses, overcome with cold and hunger, were unable to keep up with the main body, perceived the enemy in time, and managed to escape. Different accounts are given of the strength of the Russian force, varying from 200 to 800; certain it is that the Turks quietly laid down their arms without firing a shot, and are now, I suppose, on their way to Tiflis. Yesterday twenty-three more were taken. This loss leaves the Turkish commander only about 2,000 horse, 800 being regulars, the rest Bashi-Bazouks.

The infantry and artillery suffer very much from exposure and cold, nearly 200 a day being unfit for duty, while about fifty a day are sent from the different hospitals to their regiments, weakened by illness, and quite unable to resist any real attack. This morning I saw the bodies of three poor fellows who had been on outpost duty last night, being brought in on an araba, stiff and cold, frozen to death. Such a strain as this on an already small garrison must materially affect the chance Mukhtar has of holding out. He himself takes the greatest

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trouble with his men; and even now, when the thermometer is below zero, has no fire in his room, simply, he says, because, if he had it, all the other officers and men would demand it also.

Firewood is also very scarce, and the few trees which are planted in the town are rapidly disappearing; the roofs of old uninhabited houses are also torn off by the famishing poor and burned. The Armenians of the town are many of them in a starving condition, and Mr. Cole, American missionary, has been doing his utmost to relieve the distress, but from want of funds to buy flour, which is nearly 100 per cent. dearer than in former years, begs for help. He says the amount of misery he has seen within the last fortnight among the poor is frightful, and this is only at the beginning of winter. What the state of things will be in two or three months I fear to predict. Numbers are now wandering about begging, famished with cold and hunger.

A few days ago I saw a paper which had been picked up in the street by a friend's servant. Upon examination it turned out to be a proclamation from General Heimann, the Commander of the Russian advanced guard, addressed to the inhabitants of Erzeroum, saying that, as Kars had now fallen, he warned the people not to oppose the Russian advance; and that if they quietly submitted and allowed the Russians to occupy the town, they would receive the same kind treatment from their hands as did the inhabitants of Ardahan and Kars; if not, that anything that happened after an assault they should blame themselves for. This document was on Russian stamped paper, and was written in the Turkish and Armenian languages.

Yesterday a Persian Court of Inquiry, composed of two merchants and the dragoman attached to the Persian Consulate, left here for Hassan-Kalé, at the request of the Russian general, to inquire into the loss of seventy camel loads of goods alleged to have been stolen by Cossacks when on their way to Persia through the Russian lines.

The weather having been dark and foggy for a few days, has again brightened up, and the hard frost continues. The streets are one mass of solid ice, as the snow, which melts for

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an hour or so during the day, freezes as soon as the sun goes down, and makes it dangerous even to walk. Out on the plain it is not so bad, as the ground is quite smooth and hard.

The report which I mentioned in my last letter of the Russians having worn Turkish uniforms at Kars has turned out, as I suspected it would, a mere invention of the Turks. Ghazi Mukhtar Pacha says no such thing occurred, and he would probably know had it been so. The late commander of Kars is at Baiburt, and puts off coming here, pleading illness. Hussein Bey, a man who spent many years in England at one of our large military schools, is reported to be now in the Russian camp.

The following letters are from the correspondent whose pen has already described the incidents of the attack on Erzeroum after the fall of Kars and the retreat of Mukhtar Pacha.

□ ERZEROUM, *December 20th.*—An apparently inexplicable calm pervades the Erzeroum situation for the moment. As far as the city itself is concerned, there has not been during the past month the slightest sign of combat; the shops have been reopened, traffic partially resumed, and people seem to forget that the enemy is less than an hour's march from the gates—on one side at least, that of the Deve-Boyun Pass, south-east of the town.

The physical surroundings of Erzeroum have a good deal to do with this state of affairs. It is situated something like Kars, in the northern curve of a semicircle of hills, and close to the base of the latter. These hills, or rather mountains, completely shut out from the low-lying city the view of the ground occupied by the enemy, and are crowned by formidable forts, which prevent the Russians from showing over the concentric hills beyond, unless bent on an assault. The winding Deve-Boyun valley or pass opens into the southern portion of the girding semicircle, but from within the ramparts one can only see the point where it debouches into the plain. The Russian flank columns are shut out from view

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in the same manner, so that ocularly they have no existence for us. Then the authorities propagate all kinds of rumours about the retreat of the enemy, and keep the population in a tolerable state of confidence.

Still the storm may burst on us at any moment. I, who for so long have looked at the Russians from Achmet Mukhtar's camp on the Aladja Dagh, and seen them, week after week, so inactive, and apparently so impotent to effect aught against us, and who so shortly after witnessed the utter rout of the Turkish army on the same ground, do not share the confidence which a month's Russian inaction at Deve-Boyun seems to have created here, even among officers of considerable experience. They have not been inactive along the rest of their line, and, from a distance of two days' journey, have gradually crept up to within six hours of the forts along the Olti valley. Behind the southern hills of our semicircle they are equally close; and one night's march may see them joined at Illidge or Pernacaban, between us and Trebizond.

Some explain the present Russian inaction by stating that transport of war material being impossible in this truly Siberian weather, they are preparing to winter in the valleys, and in the plain of Hassan-Kalé. Under this belief the Turkish soldiers have commenced burning the villages in the direction of Tortum, hoping thereby, on one flank at least, to deprive the enemy of ready-prepared lodgings, and compel them to retire to Olti. Moussa Pacha and his men are engaged in destroying all the forage in that direction they cannot carry off. The inhabitants of the destroyed villages have been forced to retire to others nearer Erzeroum, or to emigrate towards Trebizond.

This theory of the impassability of the roads in rear of the Russian position is untenable. The road is by no means as difficult as the road over the Kop Dagh and Zigana Dagh, on the way to Trebizond, and yet Turkish supplies arrive every day from the latter town. In all likelihood the increased difficulty of transport has a good deal to do with the tardiness of the Russian operations against Erzeroum; but it certainly is not its primary or most important cause. I be-

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lieve that in view of the difficulties a strongly fortified point like Erzeroum presents, the magnitude of the turning movements, and the necessity of following up a first success with promptitude, large reinforcements are required; and though the extra forces from Kars have arrived, a still further addition of strength will be necessary before the Russian army can commence its final operations for the total conquest of Armenia. Even after the fighting on the 18th and 25th of August the Russians were forced to allow more than a month to elapse before they could recommence their attacks on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th October, and subsequently ten days more had to pass by before the arrival of still further reinforcements enabled them to strike the final blow at Aladja. Then came a rapid advance, the siege of Kars, and the battle of Deve-Boyun, which must have cost the victors dear. Finally, there were the attacks of the 9th and 12th of November on Erzeroum itself. All this must have drawn seriously on the strength of the Russian army, so much so, that in all likelihood it is unable for the moment to recommence operations on a scale of the necessary magnitude.

From the date of the last fighting till to-day is little over a month, and in view of the increased distance to be marched over, and the increased difficulty of transport, I do not think it likely anything like a serious attempt will be made before the end of December or perhaps middle of January. Meanwhile anything like an offensive movement on the part of the Turks is out of the question. The regular troops are few in number, between twelve and fifteen thousand, and the local volunteers are of but little use, even for defensive purposes. A very considerable number of these latter are Armenian Christians, almost to a man anxious to see the Russians in Erzeroum, and at present going through their couple of hours' daily drill merely as a matter of policy, in order to stand well with the authorities.

As regards the power of Erzeroum to hold out against a mere passive blockade, I think it quite possible that the population and troops have ample provision of breadstuffs to last well into the spring. At present meat is plentiful and cheap; but the moment the Trebizond road is held by the Russians,

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animal food will be impossible to get at. Owing to the occupation of the Deve-Boyun Pass and Olti Valley, and consequent cutting off of the usual wood supply from the forests of the Soghanli Dagh, fuel is scarce and dear. Some does reach us from the direction of Ersingan, but it is very little; and the distance from which it has to be conveyed renders its price so high as to put it beyond the reach of ordinary purses. In its place the peculiar dung fuel, *thessele*, as it is called, composed of cattle droppings kneaded with earth and dried in the sun, and the only fuel of the peasants, is being largely brought in from the neighbouring villages. Some old houses, too, are being demolished, and the very considerable amount of wood used in their construction distributed to the troops.

Without fuel of some kind, existence in Erzeroum at this season is impossible; and not a day passes that dozens of soldiers coming off night guards are not carried to the hospitals with frost-bitten extremities. Apropos of hospitals, notwithstanding that 4,000 sick have been despatched to Ersingan, close on 7,000 now crowd the wards of the extemporised infirmaries, and the number is hourly increasing. There is no means of transport to convey them to milder and less crowded quarters elsewhere. Even if such means existed, it would be fatal to send sick or even convalescent men on a six or seven days' journey at such an inclement season. The Russians have not sent in the sick and wounded Turks from Kars, as it was currently reported here they would do. In my last I ventured to doubt the authenticity of the rumour.

An event occurred six days ago which to no small extent puzzled and alarmed the population. The British Consul was suddenly and peremptorily ordered to leave Erzeroum, taking with him all the archives of the Consulate, and that without loss of an hour. In fact, so suddenly did he take his departure, that he was obliged to leave a large portion of his furniture behind. The Konak, or Consulate, is now occupied by the doctors sent by Lord Blantyre and the Stafford-House. Committee. What the meaning of this sudden recall is, no one here has the slightest idea, and the Consul, even if he

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himself knew the reason, took care not to impart his knowledge to any one else. Looking at the event from every possible point of view, it is to us here inexplicable, and up to the moment of writing no information whatever on the subject has reached Erzeroum. The French and Persian Consuls are now the only foreign representatives remaining.

Should this somewhat curious event indicate a knowledge of the imminence of the capture or bombardment of the town, or of its blockade, I am more and more astonished at Mukhtar Pacha remaining here with his army. Once the town completely surrounded, the Turkish forces here degenerate into the position of a mere garrison. As there is no other Turkish army in Armenia, the whole province would lie at the mercy of the enemy, and Mukhtar and his men be ultimately forced to surrender. In fact, our situation here is extremely interesting; and I am very curious to see how it will end. Nearly every European here believes in the ultimate capture of the town, and that, too, within a short space of time.

The whole surrounding country is one howling wilderness of driving snow, into which it is even dangerous to venture, and the cold passes all belief. Real Christmas weather—too much so!

□ ERZEROUM, *December 25th.*—We are blockaded. For the last two days the Russians have been showing unusual activity in the Olti Valley. The Turks tried to destroy the villages at the mouth of the valley, but were beaten back by a superior cavalry force. Muhir Ali, a celebrated guerilla chief on the Turkish side, was shot through the thigh in a cavalry fight near the village of Kirsk the day before yesterday. The Russians are now in the immediate vicinity of Erzeroum, about two hours' distant in the plain between this and the Trebizond road. Probably the telegraph will be cut to-day.

□ *December 27th.*—Mukhtar Pacha left Erzeroum on Christmas night with an escort of 4,000 men, leaving Ismail Pacha to command the town. Communications, telegraphic and

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postal, are still open, but I expect that this letter will be the last from Erzeroum.

The Russian column which threatens to cut our communications consists mainly of cavalry. Fourteen field guns also support it, and four battalions of infantry, in all 7,000 or 8,000 men.

□ *December 28th*—The situation is unchanged. Mukhtar Pacha is recalled to Constantinople. The general belief here is that he went away from Erzeroum to organize a new army to raise the siege in the spring. Some 8,000 men are at Baiburt, to intercept the Russian turning movement by the Ispir Dagh, to the right of the road to Trebizond. Most serious dispositions are being made for the defence of the place. It is believed that Erzeroum will hold out till the relieving army comes to help it. I do not believe this. The Armenians are already speculating on the favourable change the Russian occupation will bring about. I have been often invited to visit the town, only one year after the Russians may be in possession, in order to witness the wonderful change for the better which will take place. The Russians occupy the village of Henzig. General Heimann is in the village of Shafta. Several battalions are in the Olti Valley. Tergukasoff is in the village of Henzig with a large force of cavalry. We can see the enemy's troops manœuvring from the ramparts. Yesterday the entire telegraph wires and apparatus were despatched from Erzeroum to Baiburt, with the view of repairing the breaks.

The chief danger seems to be the closing movement of the Russians in the immediate vicinity of Erzeroum, a movement *en masse*. I believe that Erzeroum practically is lost; but think probably it will make a better defence than Kars. Captain Mehemed Pacha, virtually in command, is the bravest soldier in the army of Anatolia.

A few additional particulars of affairs in Erzeroum at the latter end of December are furnished in the communication below :—

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§§ Syra, *January 15th.*—I am on my way home from Erzeroum to England.

Since my last letter, dated from Erzeroum, I have been unfortunate enough to fall a victim to a fever peculiar, I believe, to that town, which rendered me in a few days unfit for work of any kind, and but for the kind nursing of the English doctors there, Messrs. Ryan, Denniston, and Patterson, I should have fared much worse. As soon as I was strong enough to undertake the journey they advised me to set out for England. So I left on December 28th.

The day previous to my departure Mukhtar Pacha, who had commanded the Turks with energy and skill during the summer and autumn months, left for Constantinople, and with him the last hope of anything like a spirited or successful defence of Erzeroum. His place is now occupied by the Kurd Ismail Pacha, who has no pretensions to be a soldier, and who spends most of his time praying and reading the Koran. Under his command the town, I expect, will not hold out long, and indeed if it were only attacked with any considerable force, I have no doubt the Russians would be masters of the capital of Armenia in a very few hours. I do not envy them the prize they are sure, sooner or later, to gain. It is now little better than a huge hospital, with more than a hundred soldiers a day going to their last home. Their bodies are placed just under the ground, first having been exposed to the frost for a night. When a thaw comes in April next the consequences must be terrible. At present typhus fever rages, and the intense cold tells very much against the poor fellows, badly clothed and fed. Numbers are brought in daily suffering from frost-bite, and scarcely a night passes without some two or three being frozen to death.

Just before I left I heard on very good authority that there was flour sufficient only for eleven days, but unground grain enough to last three or four months. The mills in the villages around have nearly all been taken by the enemy, and in them was a supply of food which the Turks had stored up but left without guards. The Turkish soldiers have before now held places when living only on grain bruised up and then boiled.

I am very glad to be able to give you a few details about the

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alleged Russian atrocity of sending wounded men away from Kars during the severe weather. I heard these facts from some of the wounded soldiers themselves. It was impossible they said, to give anything like an accurate account of the number which were sent (the Turkish authorities say 2,000), as they started in parties of from thirty to seventy, and on different days. They were first brought to the stores where the clothing was kept, and given something extra to wear on the journey. They were also supplied with several rations of bread, and besides were each given thirty piastres to buy tobacco or whatever they wished on the way. I may add that for the most part the wounds were slight. There is no doubt they suffered much from the cold, but I don't believe the Turkish account that all except 317 who arrived at Erzeroum perished.

Many of those who left Kars without doubt went to their homes, which were in the villages round about. Those who came to Erzeroum spoke in the highest terms of the kindness they received from the Russian soldiers who were stationed in the different villages through which they passed. They always got them houses to sleep in, and, where wood could be procured, fire also. One man told me his comrade grew tired before the halting-place for the night was reached, and lay down on the roadside, where he was found by some Russian soldiers, who carried him to the nearest village, which was nearly two hours' distance. There they took as much care of him as if he had been one of themselves. He also added that the Russians were brothers, not enemies. Many said they would never again carry arms against the Russians, they had been treated with so much kindness.

On the other hand, in the villages where there were only Circassians and where the Russians had no troops, their head man was taken, their money stolen, and they themselves treated as if they had never suffered, fought, and bled for their country. It would be well for those people who write about Russian atrocities if they looked nearer home, and marked how the Turkish authorities treat their own wounded.

All communication between Trebizond and Erzeroum is now

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stopped, and if Erzeroum is captured and the garrison there falls into the hands of the Russians, there will scarcely be a Turkish soldier left in Asia Minor. There are a couple of battalions at Baiburt and seven or eight hundred men at Trebizond. Those, with the troops at Batoum, will be the sole representatives of Mukhtar Pacha's once fine army.

Sir Arnold Kemball has returned from Pernacaban to Baiburt, where he remains for the present.

The following letters continue the story of the investment of Erzeroum:—

□ ILLIDGE (NEAR ERZEROUM), *January 2nd.*—The speculations I ventured on in one of my last letters have been verified. Though within cannon shot of the town since the battle of Deve-Boyun, the Russians, with the exception of the two attempts to storm Erzeroum, have remained almost entirely inactive, at least as far as hostilities are concerned. Still they have been steadily pushing their way down the Olti Valley and behind the Palantoken mountain south-east of the town, both columns gradually converging to a point of union in the neighbourhood of the village from which I write. Both forces are now in alarming proximity to the Trebizond road, and it is a matter of a few days at the furthest, it may be a few hours, that the town of Erzeroum be completely blockaded. For some days past we have been accustomed to see from the ramparts of the town the Cossacks leisurely marching from one village to another requisitioning corn and forage. Two days ago, as I telegraphed, they entered the Mohammedan village of Souyouk Chernik, only three quarters of an hour's march from the Olti gate of Erzeroum. The guns on the Kop Dagh opened fire, and succeeded in forcing the Cossacks to retire. I went out with a troop of Turkish cavalry, and entered the village twenty minutes after the departure of the Russians. The head man of the place told me the latter simply asked about forage, and whether any Turkish troops were concealed in the village. He further asked me to request the artillery commander not to

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fire any more, as the shells had done considerable damage in the place.

Yesterday, learning that an unusual movement was noticeable among the Russians, and not wishing to be shut up in Erzeroum, I started for this place, where I shall remain till the last moment. Yesterday, shortly after my arrival, I thought that moment had already come. A force of some 700 Turkish horse, under the command of Edhem Pacha, usually occupies Illidge, to watch the fords and bridges of the Kara Su, the western branch of the Euphrates, and which has hitherto constituted the main barrier between the enemy and the Trebizond road, which passes through the village.

The Pacha and his men started on a patrolling expedition towards Pernacaban early in the afternoon, and the Cossacks who occupy the village of Usni, an hour and a half's march distant, took advantage of the circumstance to try and surprise the village. At half-past four o'clock they were already, to the number of some eight or nine hundred, so close to us that we could count the advanced guard without the aid of a glass. At this juncture the Turkish cavalry, warned of the danger, were seen hurriedly returning to Illidge, and only just in time to prevent its capture. The Russians advanced up to the banks of the river, but, finding they could not arrive at the village before the Turks, after reconnoitring us for half an hour they drew off to their camp at Usni. The situation has become critical in the extreme, and should the Turks desire to maintain their communications with Trebizond open, a much larger force than that at present here, must be drawn from the garrison at Erzeroum. The Kara Su at this point runs nearly east and west, and half way between Illidge and Erzeroum expands into an elongated sheet of water, known as the Illidje Su. It is here crossed by two bridges, its depth rendering it unfordable. While these bridges were held, a formidable obstacle intervened between the Russians and the Trebizond road, which runs more or less parallel to the stream; and some flying columns of cavalry amply sufficed to prevent parties of the enemy from molesting the traffic. At the present season, however,

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matters are greatly changed. The intense cold has frozen the river to a depth of 18 inches; and not only cavalry but ox-waggons pass across it. It has practically ceased to be an obstacle; and it is pretty certain we shall shortly see the Russians take advantage of the circumstance to possess themselves of the road on its southern bank.

I understand that Mehemet Pacha, the fighting man *par excellence* of the army here, is charged with resisting such an attempt. To do so successfully, however, he should draw off from the Erzeroum garrison more men than it would be safe to bring outside the ramparts at this juncture. Besides, he will have to make head, not only against the assailants crossing the river in front, but also against those arriving on his rear from behind the Palantoken mountains, whence the second Russian turning column is about to debouch into the plain. A sortie of the kind may possibly do much to impede the establishment of a strict blockade as promptly as might otherwise be effected; prevent it ultimately it cannot. There are some who consider the Russian demonstrations of cavalry in the plain as a mere blind to cover a serious one by the Ispir mountains, turning the tremendous passes of the Kop Dagh and menacing Baiburt.

Some colour is given to this theory by the fact that the Turks have posted ten battalions and some guns at this last-named point, which, after Erzeroum and the Deve-Boyun pass, is the only position where a stand can be made to cover Trebizond. Should the Russians succeed in occupying Baiburt, the campaign may be considered at an end, until spring allows the recommencement of operations, as during this winter the enemy would scarcely think of moving against Trebizond. The great distance from their base of operations, and the exceedingly difficult nature of the road, would render such an undertaking inexpedient. Meantime, the Turks will probably organize a new army for the defence of Trebizond, and this, aided by the co-operation of the fleet, may prove the most obstinate which has yet been made in Armenia.

I do not know whether the Sublime Porte is really aware of the true state of affairs here; or whether the Government entertains any hope of being able to save Erzeroum. The

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only chance is in the place being able to hold out till late in the spring, when a victorious Ottoman army, having defeated the Russian troops, might march to its relief. Both contingencies are, however, sadly improbable. That reinforcements will be thrown into Trebizond to dispute the road thither is possible, and likely enough. That the same should be able to cut their way to Erzeroum is a contingency by no means probable. Again, within the walls of Erzeroum disease and the severity of the climate are working sad havoc. A typhus epidemic is decimating the garrison. Notwithstanding the despatch of nearly 1,000 invalids to Ersingan, over 8,000 now crowd the hospitals. Even the doctors are not exempt from the general fate. Many have died; still more are ill with typhus, and several have resigned and fled. Of the ten English doctors sent out by the Sutherland House Committee and Lord Blantyre, two, Drs. Casson and Buckby, the latter ill with typhoid, were taken prisoners at Kars; one, Dr. Guppy is dead; two more, Drs. Morrisot and Pinkerton, are attacked by typhus; and three, Drs. Featherstonehaugh, Woods, and Hughes, have left for Trebizond invalided. Only two, Drs. Denniston and Ryan, are capable of doing duty; these may at any moment be struck down. Among the German and Hungarian doctors sickness and mortality have been at work too, and the director of the medical service is daily worried with applications for leaves of absence and proffers of resignation. A strict blockade once established, and the meat supply cut off, there is no saying to what degree mortality and demoralization may arrive. The Armenian population all ardently desire the advent of the Russians, and even now speculate freely on the changed state of affairs which will supervene when a Russian governor replaces Ismail Pacha. Even the Turks themselves are unwilling to undergo the privations and losses of a prolonged siege. Looking at the situation from any point of view, I think it probable Erzeroum will not hold out till the ensuing spring.

The weather is bitterly cold; mountain and plain alike deeply covered with snow. It would be hard to find a more Lapland-like scene than that which spreads around me—the vast plain of Erzeroum blinding white with the dazzle of snow; the

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ghostly white hills scarcely distinguishable from the snow-fraught clouds around and above them, and far off the domes and minarets of Erzeroum, looking as if chiselled from Parian marble. Men and women, looking like animated bundles of dirty sheepskins, plod about ankle-deep in snow, dragging after them the little wooden sledges which at this season replace the block wheeled ox-carts of summer. Before one has been five minutes in the open air, his beard and hair are frozen stiff, and in point of colour assume a most reverend appearance. Stand still for two minutes, and you are literally frozen to the ground. Notwithstanding the voluminous sheepskin coats served out to the soldiers, especially the cavalry, cases of frost-bite needing amputation are exceedingly frequent.

It is not easy to write under such circumstances as those in which I find myself at this moment. For want of anything even bordering on a table or chair, I am compelled to lie flat on the bass matting which covers the damp earth floor of the wretched Armenian *oda* I inhabit. I write by the light of an iron lamp of antique and primitive form. Melted butter takes the place of oil, and the rude cotton wick leans slantingly in the spout of the sauce-jug-shaped utensil. Cattle groan and mutter at my elbow, and some industrious rats, burrowing in the thick flat earthern roof above, are kicking down whole handfuls of sand and dirt into my ink-bottle and over my paper. A block of dung-fuel smoulders in a hole in the wall beside me, and from time to time a storm gust whirling down the low chimney sends the grey impalpably-powdered ash into my eyes.

□ Aschkale (nine hours from Erzeroum), *January 4th.*—I was chased out of Illidge last night by the Cossacks, and had to make my way here in the dark, my horse sinking mid-leg deep in the snow at every step. The entire Turkish cavalry force retired at the same time, and are now watching the passes of the Iskr mountains which open towards this village. The post, which was unable to leave Erzeroum yesterday, has managed to come through this opening. It will in all likelihood be the last, unless the sortie about to be

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made from Erzeroum succeeds in forcing the Russians out of range of the Trebizond road. This, however, appears to be very unlikely, as the Russian converging movement would take their assailants in front and rear. To-morrow the action is expected to take place, and I will telegraph the result, unless the Russians push on and destroy the wires.

The cold passes all belief. In the *oda* where I passed the night, a cavalry soldier was frozen to death; and horses and baggage mules strew the way. The number of carcases of these animals are so great, as to have attracted an immense number of wolves and foxes to the plain, and their foot-prints mark the snow in every direction. My servant, whom I despatched with letters to a neighbouring village, was attacked by two wolves, and had to gallop for his life.

The critical moment for Erzeroum seems to have arrived, its fate, in fact, depending on the issue of the coming combat. In case the Russians succeed, we shall all have to decamp to Baiburt, which will then become the great centre of interest; as Erzeroum will, I believe, undergo a simple blockade. In any case, I believe the town to be practically lost.

□ PERNACABAN VILLAGE, *January 5th.*—As I finished the preceding paragraph, and was about to despatch my letter. the sudden arrival, pell-mell, of Edhem Pacha and his 1,600 horse from the vicinity of Illidge, announced the occupation of that village by a strong Russian force, and I retained my letter to add further particulars. Yesterday, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, six battalions of Russian infantry, preceded by two regiments of cavalry, boldly crossed the Kara Su, and took possession of Illidge. Their first act was to cut the telegraph wires, and to throw out vedettes in this direction. Edhem Pacha, supposing that he saw only the advanced guard of a whole army corps, immediately fell back rather hurriedly in this direction.

I was quietly reclining on the floor of my *oda* at Aschkalé, the best in the miserable village, that of the local magnate or Bey, as they style him. Edhem Pacha, looking like King Christmas, white from head to foot with hoar frost, rushed hurriedly in, and divesting himself of his numerous fur coats

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and head and face wrappers, threw himself on a mattress at the fire opposite that which I occupied. He seemed greatly perturbed in spirit. He gave several orders in rapid succession about outposts and vedettes, and then his servant produced a large wicker-covered gallon bottle of rhaki.

He turned abruptly to me and asked what my countrymen were about. England seemed going to sleep, he said. "There is Erzeroum completely blocked; its last avenue of communication with the outer world cut off; all the same as lost." And he continued pouring out his dissatisfaction in the same strain for about an hour.

I felt glad that I had taken the rather emphatic hint of the Cossacks on the previous evening, and left Illidge there and then. Edhem Pacha seemed divided in opinion as to whether he should retreat on Ersingan, or merely push on to Pernacaban.

"You'll have the Russian cavalry here to-morrow," he said, "and there is no knowing how we may be cut off."

He asked me if I believed that General Kemball was still at Pernacaban.

I said that I believed so.

"Then," he said, "we will go up there together to-morrow, if you like."

The evening wore on; orderlies and officers coming and going continually on one business or another.

It was about half-past nine in the evening when an orderly rushed in with a despatch, to the effect that the same afternoon Mehemet Pacha had made a sortie from Erzeroum in connection with a flank movement led by Ismail Pacha, and that the Russians, after a brief cannonade, had evacuated the village, and retired across the river again. The Pacha immediately issued orders for the entire force to be ready to march on Illidge within an hour.

Then followed a scene of confusion such as I have rarely witnessed. Bugles sounded and re-sounded in vain. There was no response save on the part of the local guard, and a couple of dozen Karapabaks or irregular horsemen. The Pacha stormed and raved, despatched his second in command and his aides-de-camp hither and thither, but all in vain.

"Where are the officers; where are the men?"

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"In the different villages," was the reply.

In fact the thing was only reasonable, inasmuch as no orders had been given on the subject. Aschkalé is a miserable tumble-down hamlet of a few dozen cabins crowded by an excessive population. It was impossible to find quarters for sixteen hundred men and horses there; and the subordinate officers had given *carte blanche* to their men to find lodgings where and when they could.

The night was bitterly cold, and a kind of smothering smoke like frozen mist filled the air, rendering a man invisible at fifty yards. Just the sort of weather for a surprise, had the Russians been in a position to effect one. The soldiers accordingly went off in scattered parties to different villages, some two, three, and four, and even ten miles distant. This may seem incredible; but it is positively true. Some came as far as Pernacaban, three hours' ride from Aschkalé. Orderlies were at once sent off to the surrounding villages to order the men in; but notwithstanding every effort not more than five or six hundred could be got together by midnight. There were fragmentary squadrons without officers; and officers without men. I dare say this scattering of the troops was the only available means of finding the cover so imperatively necessary, for it was almost certain death to attempt bivouacking on such a night, but with the enemy in such supposed dangerous proximity, it was courting certain destruction. I don't believe the entire force has been yet got together. Some of them are here even as I write, late in the evening.

The Pacha having seen this fraction of his command on their way back to Illidge went to bed; but started himself long before daylight in the same direction. Knowing, as I did, that the telegraph wires had been cut, it was useless to undertake a seven hours' ride to Erzeroum for the purpose of sending a despatch. They had told me at the central office in that town that there was a telegraph station at Pernacaban, whence I could send French or English messages. Accordingly, early this morning, I rode over here, climbing the first slopes of the Kop Dagh. The journey, which is ordinarily one of three hours, owing to the deep snow is now one of at least four hours. On reaching this village, hid away up in a snowed up

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mountain gorge, I discovered to my disgust that the operator was a Turk, and could forward only Turkish messages. It was too late to return to Aschkalé, so I made up my mind to camp here for the night. I got lodgings in a wretched hovel, where I write these lines. To-morrow I despatch my letters by special foot courier to Trebizond: for across these tremendous mountains from seven to eight thousand feet high, and of rude ascent, a man on foot moves quicker than a horseman.

Among the officers and men I spoke to at Erzeroum and along the way here a profound want of confidence exists in their new commander, Ismail Pacha, now raised to the grade of Mushir. Indeed, his conduct of affairs at Bayazid was not that to inspire confidence. All, too, seem to despair of being able to hold Erzeroum, and seem to consider it as already lost. Baiburt is the next point at which to make a stand, and, if that be taken or turned the Russians are masters of Armenia. The fact that the deep snow and bitter weather have not prevented the enemy's operations, at best only slightly retarding them, seems to have completely upset Turkish defence plans. It now appears evident that the Russians will have worked their will in Armenia before either the weather or their resources permit the Turks to resume the offensive. And yet, as far as I have seen, the latter stand the cold remarkably well.

On my way from Aschkalé to-day I passed numerous groups of invalids, mostly soldiers convalescent after typhus and typhoid. They were being sent on from Erzeroum to Baiburt, a distance of about one hundred miles, for more than half the way over snow-clad mountains. They were on foot and each man carried his own pack. When sick men are capable of such a journey on foot over the snowy wolf-haunted wastes and tremendous precipices of a mountain range twice as high as Snowden or Ben Nevis, and in such weather, surely their companions who are well in health should be able to march and counter-march through the snow quite as well as the Russians.

□ BAIBURT, *January 11th.*—When I reached Pernacaban, on the slopes of the Kop Dagh, in my somewhat precipitate retreat from the neighbourhood of Illidge, I thought that

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a few days at least of repose would be permitted me. I could not imagine that the situation was so hopeless, and that Armenia was so completely abandoned to the Russians as to all appearances it is at this moment. I had supposed that, though Erzeroum was besieged, and a colossal invading army menacing the roads leading to the coast, a stout stand would be made in the passes of the Kop Dagh. This has not been done, and for a very good reason. Save a few scattered battalions there are now no Turkish soldiers in Armenia who are not hopelessly blocked at Erzeroum and Batoum.

On the 8th I noticed a suspicious movement in the village of Pernacaban. Sick soldiers were being sent off across the mountains in the direction of Baiburt, and mules laden with ammunition and flour followed them at intervals. Still I held on in the hope of seeing a force of some kind appear, to make at least a show of resistance, if nothing more, but all the men, principally cavalry, who appeared were marching in the wrong direction, away from the enemy and towards the sea coast. Still, I remained at my post; and it was only about eleven o'clock on the 9th that, for my personal safety, I found it necessary to move off. Edhem Pacha and his cavalry came hurriedly in, announcing that the Russians had occupied Aschkalé with a considerable force, he himself narrowly escaping being made prisoner.

He owed his escape to the timely warning of his host, who informed him that the Russian cavalry was advancing its flanks to surround the village. The bulk of his Zaptieh cavalry and Karapabaks were stationed at Karabuyouk Khan, two hours and a-half distant along the Erzeroum road. The Cossacks, moving stealthily along the opposite bank of the frozen Kara Su, under cover of the dense snow fog, and crossing on the ice succeeded in surprising the Turks, some 600 strong. There was no fighting. The Ottomans fled in disorder. Those who were well mounted fled across the plain, scattering in every direction; and those whose horses failed them were either cut down, or made prisoners. The Russians then immediately advanced, occupying Aschkalé, and pushing a force towards Pernacaban, three hours' march further on. It was at this juncture I started.

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General Kemball, who for some time past had vegetated in an *oda* in the village, deeming Erzeroum too unsafe since the battle of Deveboinou, rode out along the Aschkalé road to reconnoitre the enemy. He had scarcely turned the angle of the road a quarter of a mile from the village, when he was fired on by the leading Cossacks. A general stampede followed. The General, Edhem Pacha, the remnant of the cavalry, and all the inhabitants who could afford to leave, started at once into the entrance of the Kop Pass, fleeing before the redoubtable Cossacks, who in this campaign have achieved as great a celebrity for ubiquity and daring as the Uhlans in the Franco-Prussian war. My last recollection of Pernacaban was seeing an unfortunate man, near whose semi-subterranean hovel a telegraph post had been erected, cutting this latter down hurriedly, lest its proximity to his dwelling might call down on him the wrath of the Russian horsemen.

It is not child's play at any season to face a mountain range 12,000 feet high; still less so in midwinter in a climate like this. As I left the village on my way to the frozen steeps beyond, half seen amid the long cloud streaks that marked the cliffs above, I had serious misgivings whether any of us would effect the passage with impunity. Up we went along a zig-zag path where the snow banks rose high on either side The uninitiated stranger would have said that our path was an abandoned colliery tramway from which the rails and sleepers had been torn. The way was marked in the beaten snow by sharply cut trenches separated by intervals of eighteen inches I have seen the same peculiarity in Herzegovina and Montenegro during wet weather. It is due to the mule convoys. Each animal steps exactly in the place of that which precedes him and thus this parallel lining is produced.

We passed many and many a group of way-worn invalids, toiling painfully along, making the best of their way to Baiburt, the nearest haven of refuge for those *hors de combat.* Apropos of these Turkish invalid soldiers, it is really remarkable how the Ottoman warrior changes his skin when passed by the doctor. Your ordinary Turkish belligerent is a cheerful, obedient, long-suffering individual. He may be clothed in

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rags, be bootless, and his rations not the most regular. He may have some outpost duty to perform in a temperature where the beard and moustache represent as many icicles as there are hairs. He doesn't complain. Allah and the Padischah are for him all-sufficing reasons why he should set his own personality at naught. But let the doctor once touch his wrist, let him give but the slightest hint that the patient is not in a condition to pursue his ordinary avocation as a soldier, and a fearful and wonderful change comes over the man. The robust cheerful warrior shrinks to a shadow of himself. His shoulders bow down, his eyes become dim, his legs totter under him, and his voice shrinks to a feeble treble. I have seen many phases of warlike life, but never have I seen so sudden and complete a metamorphosis as that which overtakes the Mussulman soldier when the doctor justifies him in the idea that he is sick.

With a train of such persons I commenced the arduous and even dangerous ascent of the mountain. Some toiled wearily on; others sat by the roadside and called on Allah; and I saw forms stretched on a snowy couch that was to be their last. On an occasion like this it is "every one for himself." There is no use halting beside some wretched sufferer. You can do but little to prolong his agony; you can't take him with you. And to remain is to perish. On, on up the steep slope, where the blinding glare of the snow makes all the colours of the rainbow dance before your eyes. "Have I a chance of getting over?" was more than once asked of me by less experienced travellers, as our horses sank to the girths in the snowdrift. When the higher regions of the mountain are reached, the snow becomes firmer, and a kind of track is visible in the blinding waste. At an elevation of 10,000 feet, before entering into the dense white cloud that girds the summit, the view is magnificent. For leagues and leagues Eastern Armenia stretches at your feet. It is blank and white as death, with sable dottings here and there—the villages and rock masses. From unseen openings in distant clouds—for overhead all is leaden grey—patches of sunlight fall below, like golden spangles on an ermine mantle. Another ten minutes and our horses, wading amid snow four feet deep,

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enter the cloud region. Then all is blank. A circle of fifty yards limits the visible horizon. Living thing there is not, save the irrepressible magpie and a kind of stone-chat. Even the eagles and vultures have departed to lower levels. At intervals of two hours there are houses of refuge: blank empty tenements, where the ribs of mules and oxen grin around in the snow, half protruding like the wreck of some barque above shifting sands. Gradually the track disappears in the staring white expanse, and it is only by means of obelisk-like guide marks, and mile-stones barely protruding above the snow that we keep in the road. This lasts for some five hours, when a slight downward sloping of the way is noticed. Then the mountain side becomes dangerously precipitous, and horse and man slide ten feet at a time, pursued by great masses of detached snow which ultimately disappear over some tremendous precipice. For an hour we scramble on, slipping and sliding as we go, and at length begin to make out the sun struggling palely through the snow fog.

A little later and we leave the wall-like mist bank behind us, and emerge into the full blaze of daylight. The change is really remarkable. But a couple of minutes previously and we were moving amid Arctic surroundings; now, clear blue sky, golden sunlight, and the vegetation of the lower valleys. Still, however, the snow is six feet deep, and we pass a train of mules conveying the harem and house furniture of a local magnate, two of the animals lying half buried in the drift and struggling vainly to regain their feet. As we go on, wood pigeons and an occasional eagle or hawk appear, and six hours after leaving Pernacaban we are on level ground, and at the expiration of the seventh reach the large well-built Armenian village of Evrek. An excellent *oda* is placed at my disposal by the head man of the village, a reverend Judaic-looking elder, who supplied me with weak tea sweetened with honey and fried eggs, served with a sauce compounded of treacle and lemon juice.

At Evrek that night gathered the remnant of what was once a mobilized Turkish army—some sixty horsemen in all, with their chief, Edhem Pacha. General Sir Arnold Kemball, two

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of my brother correspondents, and myself were the only strangers in the place. Next morning we started for Baiburt, wishing to put a respectable distance between us and the lancers behind. Three hours ride from Baiburt we encountered a major and a Greek military doctor, the latter speaking French. He informed us that a suspension of arms had been telegraphed to Baiburt, and that he and the major were *en route* for Erzeroum.

In the hurry of the moment I forgot to tell him that the Russians were at Pernacaban, and would scarce allow even a flag of truce to penetrate ten hours' march behind the advanced posts. Since my arrival here I have tried to discover the origin of this armistice rumour, but in vain. General Kemball knows nothing whatever on the matter, but has heard the thing spoken of. Edhem Pacha has also heard the report, but knows nothing officially. This latter officer gave me the intelligence, which I at once telegraphed, that the Russian cavalry and mountain artillery had made their way at our heels over the Kop Dagh, and were at the moment menacing Baiburt. Their force, it seems, consists of four battalions of infantry, three sotnias of Cossacks, and a battery of mountain guns. They are now in undisputed possession of the formidable Kop range of mountains. Baiburt is at their mercy, and once there they can radiate freely over defenceless Armenia. This letter is in all likelihood the last I shall write from Baiburt. I expect to have to move on to-morrow morning, for we have no force here worth speaking of. Two battalions are pushed three hours' march from this to watch the road beside the wooden bridge over the Churuk Su. This force is merely doing sentinel duty. Serious resistance to the enemy it cannot offer. Baiburt may be considered as already in Russian hands, and with it the entire province up to the walls of Trebizond.

The military situation may be summarized as follows. The last Turkish army in Armenia is blocked within Erzeroum, hopelessly so; not even the chance of a prolonged resistance. The Russians dominate the plains far and wide. The resources of the country are in their power. Erzeroum,

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Trebizond, and Batoum alone represent Ottoman rule. There is not even the shadow of a relieving force which could co-operate with the beleaguered garrisons; nor do I think that anything of the kind is being prepared for the coming spring. Even if armies were being organized their advent would be far too late to arrest the tide of conquest. Armenia is already conquered.

Under existing circumstances it is far from easy to maintain communications with Europe. The great distance to Trebizond, the formidable mountain ranges and Siberian climate of the higher ground, render anything like carrying one's own despatches simply out of the question. No one horse can effect the journey in less than five days. The post, which travels night and day, takes two days and a half to effect the journey, and there are horse relays every six hours. The worst is, one can never count on this postal service. For instance, to-day the post is six days behindhand, and often the convenience of some local magnate must be consulted, and the public service interrupted for hours. I have found this the case so often that at heavy expense I have been obliged to send off special couriers over a distance of 200 miles to catch the Trebizond steamers.

Then the telegraph arrangements are, for a European, altogether impracticable. At Erzeroum and Trebizond only are there international services where French is understood. At Kars and all other stations up to Trebizond only a Turkish service exists. One has a dragoman, it is true, but it is rare to find among such one who can write the Turkish language. The little knowledge I have is a reading and writing one; and with it I have managed to get off my despatches in a kind of a way. Unfortunately my Turkish is classical, and even when written is scarcely intelligible to the people here, who speak only a hideous Armeno-Turkish patois.

I have just heard rumours about a sortie from Erzeroum, with a successful issue. I don't believe it. It is simply one of those rumours spread purposely to keep up the *morale* of the remaining troops. As counter weight to this rumour there is the fact visible to my own eyes, that this evening the Turkish and Armenian notabilities of Baiburt are in solemn

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conclave to decide on their course of action when the Russians arrive. My last news from Erzeroum announces the displaying of the banner of Omar, brought from Mecca by an aged Sheik. The enthusiasm was great among the Mohammedans; but unless the rumour I hear about the sortie be true, I am afraid the *Sandjack* might as well have been left at Mecca.

I cannot close this letter without alluding to a paragraph which appeared in the *Daily News* signed "C. W.," and which commented on some statements made by me in a letter from Kars. It was by the merest chance I saw the paragraph reprinted in *Galignani's Messenger*, a copy of which I stumbled across at Pernacaban. From internal evidence I judge that the paragraph was written by an esteemed friend and colleague with whom I had the great pleasure of spending some time in the Turkish camp on the Aladja Dagh beyond Kars. He allows himself, I am afraid, to be influenced by his personal friendship for Colonel Hussein Bey in his comments on my statements. He says that the Colonel's presenting a revolver at my head when I was endeavouring to save myself amid the wreck of the fugitive army was owing to my having addressed the colonel in French. I did so because Hussein Bey invariably changed from English to French when I spoke to him in the vernacular. I said to Hussein Bey, "Colonel, est-ce que vous ne me connaissez pas? I am the correspondent of the *Daily News* of London." The colonel replied, still with his revolver in my face, "It's all the same to me what you are; turn, or I blow your brains out," when one of Mukhtar Pacha's aides-de-camp came dashing by and forced the colonel to let me pass; the latter said something which roused my wrath. "Oh, a correspondent," he said, "pass on (aside), one of those people who come to our country to gain money." I might have replied that if I gained money by honest work in his country, it was certainly not from his country that the money came. I thought it rather singular to be treated as a runaway. I had been two days on the field of battle, six hours distant. I only came in when all was lost, and when Mukhtar Pacha and General Kemball were spurring hard to Kars.

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Colonel Hussein Bey, who never showed his face on the plains of Gumri, and whose valorous exploits are all of his own telling, rode for half an hour from the gates of Kars, and abused men who came from a field where he never dared to show his face. As a last comment on his military zeal, I have only to remark that he entered Kars gate five minutes after me.

What I have said about the flinging from the ramparts of the citadel at Kars I maintain. My friend, your correspondent "C. W.," speaks of Mr. Bell's sketches of courts-martial and of his own experience of similar scenes. When I wrote about the abominable conduct of Hussein Bey and his colleague Hussein Havni Pacha, I alluded to the period during which Kars was besieged, and when the well-matched pair had power of life and death in their hands. The trials which Mr. Bell has so faithfully reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* took place after the raising of the siege, when Mukhtar Pacha was on the ground; and Mukhtar Pacha is too much of a gentleman and a soldier ever to sanction the atrocities of Kars. I was at Kars when the trials of which your correspondent "C. W." speaks took place, but the civilized sentiments of Mukhtar Pacha stayed the Tarpeian atrocities and relegated the criminals to a simple death by hanging. I cannot pretend to judge of the niceties which may distinguish execution by the hanging method, whether eastern or western. "C. W." thinks it preferable to be flung from a cliff two hundred feet high to broken rocks beneath. People who were in the town when the atrocious executions to which I have alluded took place tell me they have seen the still quivering remains borne away a few yards to be interred—almost yet living. I can't enter into controversy with "C. W." as to the expediency of dying by hanging or precipitation, but I think he will agree with me that it was hardly through pure humanitarian motives that Hussein Bey adopted the new system of execution. To conclude, by a strange dispensation of Providence, a retributive justice, Colonel Hussein Bey, a prisoner of war among the Russians, is now accused by the highest Turkish authority, civil and military, of a heinous and aggravated form of treachery,

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compared to which the sin of the poor Armenians of Kars sank to insignificance. He is accused of having betrayed Kars.

Naturally our communications have never been of the best. Disordered postal arrangements and Turkish improvidence often left us isolated from Europe. Were it not for the kindly services of M. Gilbert, the French consul, we should often have been at a loss to send our news home. It is only a just tribute to this gentleman to say that every European, regardless of nationality, looked to him for the furtherance of his interests, when perhaps he should have looked elsewhere. The *Daily News* has to thank M. Gilbert for the advent of many of my letters, which, if entrusted to another representative would have met with the fate of their predecessors, and never come to hand.

January 12*th*.—Since I wrote the preceding paragraphs we have been put on the alert. The Russian cavalry have taken possession of the Kop Dagh without resistance, and are moving into the plain, threatening Baiburt, the central strategic position of Armenia. There is not even the shadow of resistance. I think it very probable that the counsels of Edhem Pacha have been adopted: the idea that if Western Europe will not interfere, Turkey should make the best terms with Russia.

□ GUMUSCHANE (TREBIZOND ROAD), *January* 17*th*.—After a long struggle through storm and snow over the Vavou Dagh and intermediate mountains, I have arrived here. I thought it best to abandon Baiburt for various reasons. In the first place, there is no European telegraph service at that village, and in order to despatch my telegrams I was obliged to have my messages translated into vague Turkish, and then sent on through an intermediary station, where they had again to undergo the risk of retranslation, a process which I fear has not added to their lucidity. Coupled with this, there was that village jealousy of surveillance, ten times worse even than at Erzeroum. Again, any moment might have found me forced to fly precipitately, as I did from Illidge; for the

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last troops watching the advent of the Russians were withdrawn. I lived in daily, hourly fear of being surprised by adventurous Cossacks; and from a sore experience, I know too much of the exigencies of warfare, especially under present conditions, not to have serious misgivings as to the fate of my horses, even though sheltered under the usually ægis name of a "war correspondent."

As far as Turkish arms are concerned, the situation in Armenia is to all appearances utterly hopeless. I have already narrated how I was chased out of Illidge by the Muscovite horsemen, when they came to occupy the decisive point as far as the practical blockade of Erzeroum was concerned; and I have already written at some length on the place itself. It is some two hours' ride from Erzeroum, on the high road to Trebizond. Its occupation cuts off all chance of throwing supplies or troops into the beleaguered town without risking the issue of a serious battle, and that, too, with serious numbers. It is true that a couple of days after, the post, carried by a couple of mules, managed to make its way out of Erzeroum, following the difficult roads along the flanks of the Palantoken mountains south-west of the town, and regaining the main road near the village of Aschkalé.

An adventurous colleague, who, deceived by the boasts of the garrison commanders, remained a day behind me, escaped by the same route with the greatest difficulty. Since then, the enemy's patrols have intercepted all access to Erzeroum by high road and by mountain. The place is completely blocked, and the Russian flying columns range far and wide, collecting for the benefit of the besieging army the large stores of grain and forage in the outlying villages, which the improvidence of the Ottoman commanders allowed to remain in such doubtful situations. The hopes of succour of the garrison are small indeed. While at Baiburt, a force of 500 horsemen, for the most part irregulars, aided by three infantry battalions, chiefly composed of convalescent soldiers, maintained a kind of guard over the road leading from the Kop Dagh; and we had some reason to believe that we should at least be warned in time of the approach of hostile forces, little as we could do to impede their advance.

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Yesterday a telegraphic order from Constantinople sent the entire cavalry force to Ersingan, together with considerable stores of old Enfield and Minie rifles, the weapons destined, I understand, to arm the surrounding population, and by the formation of corps of Bashi-Bazouks to render less the impunity with which the enemy's foraging parties might move. It is rumoured to day that a battalion of 400 men is on its way from Trebizond to reinforce the Baiburt invalids. Even should they arrive, they can do little aught but sentry duty. Oppose the Russian advance they cannot. Of course the great hope is that Erzeroum will hold out till late in the coming spring, when it is believed to be within the realms of possibility that an army can be raised and marched to its relief. The people here scarcely indulge in such a hope. They are despondent to the last degree.

"The Russians," they say, "have taken Ardahan, Bayazid, and Kars; they have beaten us back step by step to Erzeroum; they will take Erzeroum; and they will take the whole country."

This is what the Turks say despairingly. As for the Armenian population, it hopes and desires such an issue too much to venture to give vent to an aspiration. Patriarchs and bishops at Constantinople may pretend to agree as they will with the Sultan's Ministers as to the advisability of the Armenian population bearing arms in the Ottoman army, and may issue admonitions and edicts to that effect. The patriarchs and bishops dare not refuse the "invitation" to co-operate with the Government; and besides, they know full well that all their mandates will fall stillborn on a population irrevocably alienated from their masters by race, tradition, and experience. Within the walls of Erzeroum itself matters could not be worse than they are. A typhus fever epidemic rages. Even the medical staff is rapidly succumbing to it; and the mortality in the hospitals is terrible.

The day before I left the town a military doctor made the remark to me that, if the existing state of things continued, the Russians had only to wait quietly outside and a brief space of time would see the city without defenders. Add to this the earnest yearning of a large section of the inhabitants to see

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the Russians masters of the place, and it will readily be seen that Erzeroum is scarcely in a position which could warrant the belief of its holding out till a barely possible force comes to its relief. The only Turkish army in Armenia is blocked within its walls. It has become reduced to the position of a mere garrison. Not even the shadow of an army intervenes between the invaders and free access to the most remote quarters of the province. One is almost tempted to believe that the threat of the Grand Vizier to look to Turkish interests alone, in case Europe refused to interfere, is being carried into effect; and that, knowing well that the annexation of a large portion of Armenia must necessarily be among the items of the Russian peace terms, he is already beginning to save himself the trouble of trying to avoid the inevitable, and to win a place in the good graces of his adversary by quiet submission. Many think so at least.

I was at first inclined to think that the Russians, taking advantage of the utter discomfiture of the Ottoman Anatolian army, would push on to the very gates of Trebizond this winter. I find that they seem to prefer making sure of Erzeroum before they make another important step in advance. This course of action is adopted, perhaps, as much from necessity as choice. To undertake the double task of investing Erzeroum and Trebizond simultaneously would require at least an army of 80,000, if not 100,000 men. The Russians, according to the most reliable information, do not exceed 40,000 in number around Erzeroum. Notwithstanding all their efforts, the snows of the Soghanli mountains have prevented the arrival up to the present of an adequate amount of siege artillery and ammunition to commence a serious bombardment, especially in face of the very considerable number of guns of large calibre which defend the ramparts.

When this is the case as regards Erzeroum, there would be little chance of attempting the siege of Trebizond, even in the face of extempore earthworks, in view of the great and difficult distances intervening between the present Russian positions and the coast. Trebizond could, it is true, be, like Batoum, blockaded on the land side; but, like the latter, in view of its sea communications, a mere passive blockade

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would be futile. Only when time, favourable weather, and the possession of Erzeroum shall have given them a chance of active hostilities against it, will Trebizond be assailed—probably towards the latter end of spring.

Meantime, the Russians content themselves with being virtually masters of Armenia, from Kars to Ersingan, and from Bayazid to the coast. It will be curious to see whether the Porte will make an effort within the next three months to create another army in Armenia; under the circumstances, I think it highly doubtful; if Turkey do not find an ally before then, she will resign herself to *Kismet*, and Russian possession of part of her fairest territories.

As I rode to-day across the wintry wastes of the Vavouk mountains, I witnessed again a repetition of the painful scences of the Kop Dagh. The close advent of the Russians rendered it necessary that preparations should be made for a possible speedy evacuation of Baiburt; and some 600 sick soldiers, mostly men partly convalescent from dysentery and typhoid fever, were at once despatched to Trebizond. I do not suppose the half of them will reach their destination. I have seen men in this condition dying beside me in the wretched cabins where we were forced to lodge. Some days ago, as I mounted my horse, the corpse of my chamber companion was carried out.

The Turks make great capital out of the fact that the Russians, some weeks after the capture of Kars, allowed the convalescent Ottoman soldiers to return to their friends, instead of retaining them as prisoners. These Turkish soldiers chose this course of action themselves, and it is quite untrue, as stated in a telegram which has come under my notice lately, that they were "driven" from Kars. Quite the contrary. They speak highly of the treatment they received while in the enemy's hands; and from my conversations with some of them, I learn that the many deaths which occurred on the road were owing to unnecessary exposure to cold during the night on the part of invalids, whose feverish anxiety to see their friends would not allow them to take ordinary precautions. It is odd enough that the very same authorities who reprobate the conduct of the Russians with regard to

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the Turkish wounded and sick, should themselves send off on a journey of 100 miles, over Alp-like, snow-covered mountains, men who can stagger along but feebly. As I struggled through the blinding snow-mists of the Vavouk mountains I saw gaunt, hollow-eyed men, clothed in the tattered remains of what had once been uniforms. Their feet were bound up in bunches of withered mountain sedge, tied on with strips of rags and bits of ropes. Plodding mid-leg deep in drifting snow, the accumulation of frozen matter about their feet was almost enough to prevent walking. I have seen these men lying gasping at the foot of the telegraph posts, feebly holding out their hands, and begging a morsel of bread in the name of Allah. Even a strong man could not afford to linger in such Siberian wastes. Probably, had I rode back over the same road I should have scared the wolves from the bodies of the poor fellows whom necessity forced me to pass by in those dreadful mountains.

I am sorry to have to chronicle the death of a young Englishman, who came out here as a volunteer. Mr. W. H. Cowan joined a regiment of irregular horse, served in the Aladja army, and attacked by typhoid fever with subsequent dysentery died in the military hospital of Kars shortly after its occupation by the Russians. This I learn from the dragoman of the English doctors, who were permitted to pass the Russian lines before the bombardment commenced, and who have returned to Europe *viâ* Tiflis. I met the dragoman outside Baiburt as he was returning after a long round to the Turkish forces in that town.

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CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION OF THE ASIATIC CAMPAIGN.

The Russians in Kars.—False Reports of Russian Inhumanity.—Absence of General Loris Melikoff.—Orderly Behaviour of the Turks.—Diminution of Typhoid Cases in Kars, and Outbreak of the Fever in Alexandropol.—The Neighbourhood of Erzeroum.—Desperate Position of the Turkish Cause.—Mohammedan Feeling.—Ismail Pacha's Refusal to Recognize the Reported Terms of the Armistice.—Plunder of the Inhabitants.—The Impending Cession of Armenia.—Value of the Province to Russia.—Probable Development of Railway Communication.—Future of Russian Rule in Armenia.—Difficulty of Transmitting News.—Death of Mehemet Pacha.—Sketch of his Career.—Character of the Armenians, contrasted with that of the Ottomans.—Village of Hamsi-Keui.—Despair and Misery of the People.—Anecdote of a Wounded Soldier.—Difficulties of the Road.—Trebisond.—Batoum.—Unsuccessful Russian Attack on Batoum.—Telegraphic Communication with Europe Interrupted.—Mukhtar Pacha and the Sheepskin Coats.—Torpedo Exploits of the Russians at Batoum.

In the first two of the series of letters in this chapter we return to Kars, which city had been in possession of the Russians since the 17th and 18th of November of the previous year, when it was captured by assault by the troops under the command of General Loris Melikoff.

△ Kars, *January 24th.*—I have heard or read that in the year 1831, when the cholera played havoc with the Russian troops in Poland, and general demoralization was on the eve of spreading among them, the Emperor Nicholas issued an order declaring that the cholera had ceased, and in consequence all officers and men were earnestly admonished not to fall ill again with that disease. It is said that the moral impression produced by this peremptory Imperial decree had such an effect that the disease considerably diminished in virulence and contagious intensity.

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Now, it seems, a similar course is followed here with regard to typhoid. An allusion which I ventured to make in a private letter was severely censured by the authorities, who denied the epidemical character of the malady, and declared it to be merely sporadic. I am thus bound, you see, to handle this delicate subject somewhat tenderly. I know nothing about the statistics or the records of sick and dead in the villages and cantonments, but I hear that the victims there are rather numerous. On the whole, however, I stick to the belief that the civil population is by far the heavier sufferer from the disease than the military. The latter is on an average much better attended to, and can in most cases find immediately the proper accommodation and medical assistance. A native, be he Turk or Armenian, having once fallen seriously ill, never allows himself the luxury of a doctor. He will call to his aid the experienced skill of some old gipsy woman, or the godly wisdom of some vagrant dervish, whose direct relations with Heaven are not doubted by the faithful. These scientific authorities, rewarded usually with a few pence and a piece of black bread, of course hasten the patient's transit to a better world with laudable celerity. There is mourning and wailing all over the country, but this only concerns civilians, and is not officially recognized.

I do not wish, however, to speak disparagingly of the civil and military administration here. They did indeed all they possibly could do to stamp out the ghastly typhoid which had its principal hotbed in the incredible filth of the Turkish military hospitals. Slightly wounded men affected with a mild form of intermittent fever, and those reduced to an unconscious state by acute disease, were all crammed indiscriminately into the wards, or into wretched houses or shops, and, intermingled with dead and dying, were left to rot or to recover at the Prophet's pleasure. There was no question of order and medical attendance. The European professional men—young Germans, Poles, and Hungarians—in the Porte's service, were all, one after the other, seized by typhoid, and were so panic-stricken and so disgusted by the intolerable stench emanating from the neglected wards, that they did all in their power to avoid their dangerous duty.

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In their justification I feel bound to add that their Turkish chiefs never paid the slightest attention to proposals or applications made for the good of the service, but were only busy filling their pockets to the detriment of the sick. These died daily by scores, and the baneful disease took almost every hour a firmer grasp on the hospitals and the city. After the successful storming of this fortress, the Russians immediately set to work and adopted the most energetic measures against the treacherous disease. All the contents of the hospitals, including provisions, were burnt. Not a blanket, not a mattrass, escaped the fire. Even the rotten boards of floors and ceilings were torn out and condemned to the flames.

These rigorous proceedings had, nevertheless, only a partial effect. A thorough cleansing would have required a general conflagration of the city of Kars. In the first instance, many of the sick soldiers had concealed themselves with their relations or friends in private houses, where they died, of course spreading the germs of the disease throughout these dwellings. Secondly, the inhabitants of this part of Armenia have the most filthy habits. There is literally no provision for cleanliness or decency in the houses, and the streets are the receptacles of every kind of disgusting filth. In their hopeless struggle with the inveterate habits of such people, no blame can be cast on the Russian authorities. They did all they could do. Instead, however, of being satisfied with the results gained, and of persevering arduously with the work, they take other ground. They try to subject typhoid to rules and regulations, without removing its causes. Many functionaries wish, indeed, earnestly to make everything perfect under Russian rule. This is clearly a most commendable spirit for individuals as well as for nations, especially if they do their best to carry out their ideas. Other men of position, on the contrary, fall into the error of believing that everything is already perfect in Russia, and think any further improvement unnecessary.

I notice that the Turkish official accounts state that the Russians had driven about 2,000 sick and wounded across the snow-covered country from Kars to Erzeroum, where only 400 of

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them arrived alive, in a destitute condition. All the remainder are reported as having died on the road through cold and privation. The fact is that the Russians, after the capture of Kars, were overburdened with about 17,000 prisoners, and 5,000 Turkish sick and wounded. The small Russian army could not have properly dealt with such numbers without neglecting its own sufferers, amounting to thousands. Besides, a large portion of the forces had to be told off to escort and guard the undisciplined crowd. So the authorities shut their eyes to deserters. The houses of Kars were never searched, although it was well known that hundreds of armed Ottoman soldiers had taken refuge there. Whosoever tied the Red Crescent round one of his arms was perfectly at liberty to go wherever he thought convenient, without being molested by sentries or patrols. Many availed themselves of the opportunity thus given to them, and escaped in plain clothes.

The men in the hospitals were on a different footing, owing to their confinement under the superintendence of warders and the guard outside. These were spoken to, and the choice was left to the less serious cases, either to be treated here or elsewhere by the Russian medical staff, and when cured detained as prisoners of war, or to take care of themselves among their relations and friends. Longing for personal liberty, and terrified at the idea of a prolonged captivity, all who believed themselves able to walk or to proceed by any conveyance wanted to be off at once. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that a considerable fraction of the stronger patients pronounced for freedom. Accordingly they were released without further ceremony. After having each received a rouble and a ticket of passage from the Russian authorities, they took charge of themselves, every one following the shortest road to his homestead. What subsequently may have occurred to them is beyond the reach of our observations. The truth is that the whole country, plains and mountains, is strewn with Turkish villages, where a fatigued, hungry, or sick Ottoman soldier can easily find food, shelter, and sympathy, in conformity with the proverbial hospitality of the East. The fact that of the 2,000 soldiers 400 really arrived at Erzeroum is so much the more

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astonishing as nobody here expected it. These poor fellows were not at all bent upon serving again, and, therefore, were eager to avoid impressment a second time into the ranks during the war. Most of them, with the exception of those who belonged to the city of Erzeroum itself or its immediate environs, made a circuitous trip around it, and tried to reach their snow-buried villages clandestinely.

The hundreds of men reported as having been frozen to death existed only in Mukhtar Pacha's imagination. He imputes to his enemy the atrocities which he would have commited himself under similar pressure. His method of despatching prisoners and wounded is well known. The information which I have obtained from eye-witnesses corroborates the statement that the Russian prisoners and wounded have been simply killed on the field of battle by indirect orders from the superior Turkish officers. When time was left torture was never objected to. Only ten or twelve Russian prisoners have been spared by the Turks during the whole Asiatic campaign.

In reference to military operations, nothing positive has yet transpired. General Loris Melikoff is the only man who would not hesitate to explain the true state of things in frank and explicit language. Unhappily, he is absent again, after a few days' stay here, and there is no sign indicating his speedy return. I have not had the pleasure of seeing him for the last two months. To follow him to Erzeroum is out of the question. Evén the majority of the officers belonging to his staff have been left behind, very much against their wishes, and their applications for permission to go to the front have not been complied with. The reason is that the small town of Hassankalé, and all the villages around it and Erzeroum, are actually overcrowded with officers, soldiers, horses, and commissariat stores. No accommodation can be afforded there to volunteer or supernumerary staff officers, still less, of course, to mere camp followers. Besides, vehicles cannot be obtained for money, because the snow is very deep, the cold intense, and forage not to be found.

Here in Kars the temperature varies from ten to twenty-five

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degrees Celsius below zero, which in itself is disagreeable enough to endure in badly-constructed houses by the unhappy inmates. But sometimes fearful blasts double and treble the intensity of the cold, and thickly-whirling snow-drifts sweep over the ice-bound country. This state of things may serve as a standard by which to judge of the manner in which such weather must tell on the besieging army before Erzeroum, that town being situated about 1,000 feet higher above the level of the sea than Kars. Moreover, I do not believe I am mistaken in supposing that typhoid is paying its awful visits to all the villages around there, and sweeping away hundreds of the squalid natives. At the same time, of course, it is not impossible that some soldiers, crowded with them, may also succumb to the disease. This, however, is a mere surmise on my part.

I hear that, in spite of the difficulties owing to the unfavourable season, Erzeroum has been closely invested, so that Turkish troops or provisions cannot enter into that fortress without running the risk of being intercepted and captured. Thanks to the Persian trade, Erzeroum is not only one of the largest, but also one of the wealthiest, cities of Asia Minor. In commercial importance it is, perhaps, only second to Smyrna. It is, therefore, not improbable that its corn merchants have hoarded considerable quantities of grain in their magazines, with the view of selling it at the proper moment to the necessitous classes or the Government at famine prices. In addition, the citizens being every winter blocked up by the snow, and shut out from all practical communication for months, are, even in time of peace, in the habit of buying up and storing ample provisions, including meat, which is preserved in ice, for the whole winter. The labourers and workmen, compelled to live every day on every day's earnings, cannot indulge in that luxury of precaution. But who is caring for them? A paternal Government like the Turkish will either summon them to enlist on starvation rations, or leave them to die of hunger and misery and the blessing of the Prophet.

With reference to the garrison, we may safely rely upon the

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savage energy of Ismail Pacha. No doubt he availed himself of the two months' respite, during which the Russian blockade had been more or less imperfect, to replenish the military magazines with every article of preservable food. The situation of the beleaguering Russians is, on the other hand, anything but enviable, as I have stated before. Deficiency of provisions or difficulty in getting them to the spot where wanted, scarceness of fodder, insufficient lodgings, unbearable cold and mortal disease, combine to render the sojourn of troops there almost insupportable, but at the same time give new proof of the admirable endurance and unshaken courage of the Russian soldiers. They certainly mean to hold out till spring. Their generals cannot settle the question whether it is not more advantageous to expend the lives of some thousand men at once in a desperate escalade than to sustain daily losses, which finally summed up, are likely to show a still heavier return of disabled soldiers.

More than once rumours have been spread here of the fall of Erzeroum, but no saluting shots have hitherto confirmed the welcome news. Again, just now, an assault is said to be imminent, and will at all events be attempted before the end of this month. I, however, still hope that the commanding general will resist that temptation, and postpone or abandon the scheme. It is evident enough that the attempt would be like that of a man jumping with an axe in his hand at a laurel twig trembling over the edge of a chasm. It is more reasonable under these circumstances, to cut the whole tree down. There is no absolute necessity to risk, if not the whole result, at least the prestige of the campaign in Asia, by leading thousands of brave fellows to be butchered before well-constructed ramparts. The capture of Erzeroum cannot be of primary importance, in view of the inevitable collapse of the Turkish power about to take place.

Here in Kars everybody keeps the peace. The Turks behave as well as they may always be expected to behave when their inferiority is brought home to them by stern arguments. They submit without grumbling to a force superior to their own. Hitherto they have comforted themselves with the

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delusion that Russia means or will be compelled to restore the conquered territory to the Commander of the Faithful, now their confidence is somewhat shaken. They are, however, resolved not to remain under the rule of an infidel Government, but to emigrate to the southward. There is room for many graves yet in the fever-stricken valleys of Asia Minor.

We hear here sometimes, rather too often, of daring burglaries and other misdeeds, of which regular and irregular soldiers are accused by public opinion. The other night an infirm Turk had his throat cut in the street by an artilleryman who meant to rob him. To his deep disappointment, however, the murderer did not discover a single farthing in his victim's pockets. Afterwards he dragged the corpse to the river with the intent of concealing it under the ice. But *en route* he was arrested by a patrol, and is now awaiting his fate in gaol. As you know, capital and corporal punishment have been abolished in Russia, and in ordinary times nobody can be put to death for whatever crime he may have committed. In time of war, however, martial law is proclaimed in the army, and the districts occupied by it, and then sentence of death may be passed by the military courts.

January 28th.—I am informed that typhoid has greatly diminished in Kars at present, and that fatal cases ending with death seldom occur. On the other hand, I hear that the disease has fixed its principal residence now in Alexandropol, the Russian frontier town, thirty-six miles from here.

Δ KARS, *February 8th.*—Official news has reached us that the Russian army before Erzeroum was likely to enter that fortress on the 4th inst., in conformity with the stipulation of the armistice. Whether this important event has really taken place, or whether it has been deferred on some unknown grounds, we have hitherto been unable to ascertain. This uncertainty arises from the circumstance that all official reports are sent directly from head-quarters at Hassan Kalé to the Grand Duke in Tiflis. It is thus that our public here is

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very seldom gratified with an authentic despatch. In default, we are frequently beguiled with the most extraordinary rumours, adapted to the fancy, mood, and desires of some inventive genius bent upon exciting or amusing an eager and credulous auditory. No reliance, therefore, can be placed here on anything that may be said, unless official accounts confirm it. Although these substantiate the barren facts with remarkable conciseness and accuracy, they are anything but explicit, omit the most interesting details, and slip into silence over the less glorious circumstances. We usually learn the particulars of events in our immediate neighbourhood through the erroneous statements of the Tiflis papers. This is almost incredible, but literally true. A winter of extraordinary severity has set in, and the weather is worse than at St. Petersburg. Terrific snow-drifts and chilly blasts sweep occasionally over the denuded plains and hills, and render travelling for civilians very difficult and nearly impossible. Traders, no doubt, must sometimes run the risk; but the news which they forward is anything but trustworthy. Officers and orderlies, on the other hand, either do not care for events not connected with their service, or indulge the general passion of embellishing facts with their own fancy.

While writing these lines I am informed that new difficulties, quite in the Turkish fashion, have arisen with regard to the surrender of Erzeroum which is stipulated in the armistice. Ismail Pacha, the tenacious successor of Mukhtar, has declined to accede to General Loris Melikoff's summons demanding the withdrawal of the Turkish garrison and the subsequent occupation of the city by the Russian troops. Though the fanatical Pacha is still suffering from typhoid, he is, even in his precarious state of health, noways deficient in the traditional shrewdness and the low cunning of his class. His apology for politely refusing to recognize the preliminaries of peace rests upon the allegation that, in consequence of the close investment of Erzeroum, no orders from Constantinople had yet reached him. He added, however, that if the Russian commander would allow him to avail himself of the first Ottoman telegraph station he would not object to

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communicate with the Porte for ultimate instructions. This apparently reasonable demand has been granted.

The Pacha's conduct, nevertheless, seems to be rather strange, and cannot be accounted for but by the secret desire of gaining time at any cost. The Turks still cherish the hope that an unexpected political incident may give things a favourable turn, and, therefore, they cling with teeth and nails to every drifting straw. It can hardly be believed that a place of the importance of Erzeroum has been wiped out of the memory of the Stamboul rulers in their recent troubles. It is true that the Armenian capital has been of late closely blockaded, and the telegraph wires have been cut all round; but, nevertheless, it would have been a comparatively easy task to forward a message from Constantinople to Trebizond and even Baiburt. Thence a courier would have brought it, with Russian permission, in three days to Erzeroum. Either the necessary orders were withheld by the Porte on purpose, or Ismail Pacha, guided by secret instructions, feigned to ignore them, ostensibly on his own responsibility, thinking it expedient to delude and hamper the Russians as long as possible. All sorts of misgivings are justified in negotiations with such Asiatics as the Turks have proved to be.

In the meanwhile the prospects of the Russian army cannot be very promising. If the troops had been called out of their cantonments, and massed with the view of entering Erzeroum on a fixed day in the present frightful weather, not only their disappointment must have been deep, but also their physical sufferings might have brought many men to their graves. Typhoid, moreover, has settled permanently among them. The natives, if surprised when travelling by a whirling snow-drift, relinquish all hope of reaching the next underground village, however near they may guess it to be. If on horse-back, they dismount quickly and leave the animal to his fate. Then squatting down on the road, and wrapping themselves in their large felt cloaks, with their faces turned to leeward of the gale, they resign themselves to whatever may be in store for them. Protected thus by the snow, a bad conductor of caloric, from the fierceness of the icy blast, they await patiently in their awkward position the end of the storm, or

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the end of all their worldly miseries. Whether the Russians in their light and narrow capotes are able to adopt similar measures of precaution, is questionable.

However this may be, it is certain that Ismail Pacha by his procrastination annoys his victors very much in a quite unexpected manner, inflicting upon them at the last moment heavy losses with Parthian arrows. His motives for persevering in this suspicious policy may have been strengthened by hearing of the severe defeat which the Russians lately suffered in an unsuccessful attack on a Turkish position before Batoum. It is said that they sustained there a loss of a general, sixteen officers, and 700 rank and file. We are here only acquainted with that event through mere rumours. The Russian discomfiture, however insignificant it appears in comparison with the results in Roumelia, caused here considerable anxiety. As it is magnified by the glowing fancy of the Turks into a momentous victory, it may have influenced the Pacha's counsellors and actuated his own strange conduct. The prospect of seeing the whole of the vilayet of Erzeroum and a portion of the province of Trebizond, with Batoum, handed over to Russia, is filling the Turks with horror and dismay. They refuse obstinately to believe that such disadvantageous conditions of peace have been entered into by the Porte. Moreover, their project of emigration next summer to pure Moslem districts has been seriously interfered with by that vast cession of territory. They expected to quit themselves of the infidel by simply crossing the Soghanli Mountains, and settling beyond them in a genial country, familiar to them all. Now, unfortunately, the question is widened. Should they insist on their scheme of sulky defiance, they would see themselves compelled to carry their household gods hundreds of miles away from their former homes, into a country filled with savage ruthless Kurds. Under these circumstances it is not astonishing that many turbaned grumblers mean to think twice, and are likely to prefer ultimately the lenient administration of the Moscow Giaours to the cruel exactions of hungry Pachas and murderous thieves in distant Kurdistan.

In contradiction of what has been reported about Russian

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cruelty, it must be said that if there be injustice it is rather attributable to an excess of forbearance in the application of the law than to its infringement by the officials. There can be no doubt that the Mohammedans in Russia, be they Caucasians, Tartars, Kurds, Turcomen, or Kirghis, are by far more comfortable and give less trouble, than their brethren under the Sultan's anarchical sway. In Turkey only the Pacha tribe or caste, their subordinates, and their retinue of servants, bankers, and contractors, have little to complain of. They are neither overtaxed nor ill-treated. They always take and never give. Russia, on the contrary, is following now a wise and genuine Roman policy. The subjected populations enjoy full civil and religious rights. No functionary has the power or is disposed to meddle with their mode of living, whether as agriculturists, merchants, and tradesmen, or as ever-shifting nomads. The taxes are very moderate indeed, and, moreover, nearly all the Moslems are exempted from the conscription. In time of war they are simply bound to raise, if necessary, a well-remunerated volunteer cavalry force. The system, however, is different if the conquered or incorporated nationality should enter into open insurrection. Then little mercy is shown. Every village is burnt to the ground, every household article is destroyed, and the rebels are shot down wherever they are found until they come to terms.

Our Turks here, however, do not now dream of trying the fortune of arms with their conquerors. They have opened their shops, and follow their trades and vocations with the stoical tranquillity peculiar to their race. Some are even honest enough to avow that they have never in their life enjoyed such perfect calm and security as at present. When their countrymen were in power, they were robbed shamelessly of every horse and bullock, and of every bushel of wheat and barley within sight. Never a farthing was paid for what was exacted. Now, to their great astonishment, they see themselves crushed under a shower of paper roubles which the generous-hearted and free-living Russian officers lavish upon them. Turks and Armenians charge tenfold prices for their inferior goods, especially provisions. My

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landlord, an ex-Softa, told me that ten of his best milch cows had been transferred, without his permission, into the field-kettles of the Sultan's soldiers. On denouncing the thieves he met only with a shrugging of official shoulders. Now he is taking his revenge on me. The rural population is almost reduced to mendicity. The drain of young men by reckless conscription was terribly destructive.

Well-informed people assure me that Armenia has already lost one-half of her original male population. Some 13,000 soldiers, prisoners, and inhabitants, most of them the victims of neglect and typhus, have been buried near Kars alone since its occupation by Russia! One shudders to think of the rate of mortality under the Turkish rule. The villages are the abodes of misery, starvation, and typhoid. Many houses had in the summer-time the beams of their roofs taken off by the Ottoman soldiery for culinary purposes, and were rendered thus utterly uninhabitable for the returning fugitive families. With my own eyes I saw five deserted hamlets entirely demolished in this manner. It is true that the example set has been followed in many instances by the Russians. The soldiers in some cantonments and bivouacs are placed in the alternative of either freezing to death or of unroofing some of the neighbouring empty huts. For all that, there is little complaint, and cries for assistance in distress are as unusual as begging is among the destitute. The merciless tyranny of Pachas and Effendis has accustomed the people to suffer and die in silent resignation. It is not easy to extort from an obese Pacha a penny of his ill-gotten wealth, without presenting him with more than adequate compensation. Begging dervishes and lunatics are sometimes the objects of his liberalities, because they are supposed to be connected with a demoniacal world, enjoying the privilege of the evil eye, and other supernatural gifts.

In reference to the impending incorporation of Armenia Major by Russia, I can only repeat that the idea is so new and startling to the people here that they deem its realization impossible. They contend that the military situation here is not so hopeless as to justify the cession of an enormous territory, nearly equal in extent to the kingdom of the

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Netherlands and Belgium put together. They do not take into account what is going on before the very gates of Stamboul, and they do not attach credence to the Russian official statements. One fine morning, however, they are likely to become fully aware that the Porte has paid the penalty of its scandalous misconduct and obstinacy.

It does not need much penetration to understand that this new Asiatic acquisition is of the highest value to Russia. From the Armenian highlands she can easily command the roads to Mossul through Bitlis, to Diarbekir through Harput, and to Siwas and Tokat through Ersingan and Kara Hissar. That is to say, Mesopotamia as well as Anatolia is at her mercy. Even more so is Persia. The exclusive outlets for the all-important northern provinces of that sunburnt kingdom lead by Tiflis or Erzeroum to the Black Sea. The traders, however, prefer invariably the latter road, because the journey is shorter, more convenient, and cheaper. Russia, therefore, once in possession of Erzeroum, is mistress of the Shah's chief revenue, and can starve him into submission, should he ever dream of freeing himself from her powerful influence. Very soon, and without much entreating, the Shah will be glad to grant the construction of a railway from Tiflis to Teheran, a scheme which has been already under the consideration of the Russian Council of State.

At Vladikawkas the Russian railway system ends in the south-east, arrested by the formidable barrier of the Caucasus, which separates it from Tiflis, the capital of Transcaucasia. The distance between the two towns on either slope of the mountain range is a little above 100 miles measured on the metalled road. A railway parallel to the latter would require an enormous outlay for tunnels, bridges, and viaducts, and is therefore, in the present state of the Russian Financial Department, out of the question. This project having been finally discarded, another plan has been prepared and studied, and, if I am not mistaken, approved by the Emperor and the Council of State. From Vladikawkas, the terminus of the already completed Russian railways, the new line follows first the northern foot of the spurs of the Caucasian mountain range through the valley of the Terek, and thence the western

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shore of the Caspian Sea to Baku, the most important town and harbour on that gigantic lake. From this place one line is intended to branch off to Tiflis, while another is to run to the Persian frontier and thence to Teheran. The Russian portion of these railways, namely, the sections from Vladikawkas to Baku, and from Baku to Tiflis, has been traced and prepared for construction, and, but for the war, the works would have been now in full execution. With regard to a future prolongation of the line through Persia, little doubt can be entertained as to the Shah's assent. He will be a mere tool in the Emperor's hands in future.

Once firmly established in Teheran, the Russian Company, being of course only the mouthpiece and instrument of the Government, will be at liberty to push slowly onward to Herat, through fertile and well-irrigated Khorassan. As long as Armenia was in Turkish hands, as long as Kars and Erzeroum threatened and outflanked the Russian political and military advance through Persia, the railroad schemes were unsafe. It was not so much an Ottoman army, as the fear of a general revolt excited by its presence among the Caucasian Mohammedan population, which troubled Russian views on the northern provinces of Persia. General Loris Melikoff, when neutralized last summer at Kurukdere, cared much less for Mukhtar's position on the Aladja than for a Moslem rebellion, and subsequent wholesale massacre of the Armenians on the first Turkish battalion crossing the Arpa Sou. A vast conspiracy with that object had been discovered, but was prudently disregarded. Now the obstacle is on the point of being finally removed. Without claiming the gift of prophecy, I venture to predict that before two years from the conclusion of peace the Russian portion of the above-mentioned railways will be in full construction, while the other on Persian territory is likely to be diligently studied and traced out.

Whatever may be said on the question, it is obvious that only in Eastern Asia is Russia likely to become dangerous to England. In Europe the great military continental States are resolved to watch over their common interests with no less eagerness than Great Britain. The task of dislodging

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Russia from her natural fastnesses in the Armenian highlands is beyond the present strength of England and her possible Asiatic allies. Nor can Persia, either by her own exertions or with external help, disentangle herself from the tight grasp of the double-headed eagle.

The Turks, on the other hand, are at any rate thoroughly disabled. Although they may look wistfully back to their lost prestige and ruined fortune, and may be anxious to snatch an opportunity of re-establishing their ancient domination, their chance of succeeding in the undertaking is very slight indeed. Their rulers will most probably continue to mismanage what may be left in their sanguinary hands, and inaugurate anew with tyrannical blindness the old system of arbitrary exactions and venality. The morals of their leading statesmen and principal functionaries are so rotten and corrupt that none of them could resist the temptation of preying on the treasury of the unhappy subjects. Russia, on her part, is decidedly in the possession of the necessary moral elements for her future growth and consolidation. Even the present war is sure to increase her intrinsic strength by teaching her her faults. She will not fail to cast aside her inefficient institutions as well as the men who have not risen to the level of their duties.

The subjoined letters are from the correspondent lately in Erzeroum.

□ TREBIZOND, *February 12th.*—It may seem strange to the uninitiated that any intelligent person resident at Trebizond should not be well informed of passing events in Armenia, even up to the latest moment. Let them not think this is a land where railroads and telegraphs bring hourly intelligence of passing circumstances. Telegraph there is—that of Erzeroum, cut by the Russians; that of Ersingan, where nothing is going on, daily interrupted by storms; that of Batoum, practically entirely in the hands of a by no means impartial authority. Telegrams for this latter town are received with a cheerful alacrity, which shows that, as at other points where I have been, the employés depend for their salaries on the

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receipts for non-official messages; but as far as replies to the same go, one might as well telegraph to Hades. I need hardly say that in Armenia there are no railways—I mean in Turkish Armenia, for from Tiflis to Poti, in Russian territory, there is a short one, which, according to all accounts, has but little to do except conveying troops and military stores at the present juncture. There used to be regular steamers from Trebizond to Batoum, and one would have naturally thought that the exigencies of a large and actively employed garrison would have, if not multiplied the communications, at least not diminished them. Quite the contrary, however. The regular service has stopped, and even a transport steamer is a rare phenomenon; so rare, that during my fortnight's stay I have not been witness of such an occurrence.

Again and again I have gone down to the pier and scrutinized the horizon with my field-glass in hopes of discovering the welcome smoke-stream that announced a coming hope. Over and over again I have called on the Pacha, and importuned the agencies and ship-brokers. Much hope was given, but all ended in wailing and gnashing of teeth on my part. If I were Æneas, and fabled Ausonia my destination, the Fates could not have frowned more darkly between us than in their apparently malignant endeavour to prevent my getting to the insignificant port of Batoum.

I do not know whether this untoward combination of circumstances is mere chance, or only the result of the general insouciance and "devil-take-the-hindmost" policy apparently adopted at present by the Ottoman authorities. Each time I visited the pier the horizon was blank; the signal stations were undemonstrative; the coastguards shook their heads, and I was morally left "on the bleak shore alone." All the positive and authentic news from Batoum I have long since telegraphed and written about: the attack on the commanding position some days after the announcement of the armistice; the previous exploits of the Russian torpedoes; and the final fact that the town remained untaken.

From Erzeroum our only news comes through the Persian courier, who, starting from Teheran, is allowed to pass the

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Russian lines around Erzeroum. This privileged being is not, unfortunately, as intelligent as he is fortunate; and the news to be gleaned from his Asiatic understanding is not of the most lucid nature. Here is the last batch of intelligence from this source. I telegraphed it briefly before. Mehemet Pacha, the "Capitan Pacha," as they called him, the bravest man on this side of the Bosphorus, is dead—dead of typhus fever, the prevailing epidemic in Erzeroum.

As it is not likely that another chronicler of his brief life may be found, I will say a few words about him. I first knew him as a colonel of a line regiment—its number I don't remember. He was aged about thirty-two years, and was born of either Hungarian or Polish parents. He had always been selected by Mukhtar Pacha for any deed of daring which the exigencies of the campaign called for, and always came out of the trial with the most brilliant credit. He was a man who shone among his brethren in the war in Asia. I met him first in the tent of the chief of the staff. He had just been named to conduct the difficult and dangerous emprise of surprising the Russian position on the hill of Kiziltepé, the advanced point which they held nearest our lines on the Aladja Dagh of fateful memory. He conducted his mission in a manner which well sustained his past reputation. He placed the final stone of the edifice of his successes which won for his chief the title of Ghazi (victorious), and came back with only a slight flesh wound over his heart, where, thanks to his thick overcoat, the bullet had not gone deeper. And said he that eventful evening, "The commander-in-chief didn't even say so much as 'thank you' to me." He didn't know that Mukhtar Pacha had telegraphed to Constantinople, asking the grade of brigadier-general for his gallant subordinate. As general of brigade he conducted the defence of the lesser Yagni hill (Yagni Coutchuk), which foiled the tremendous Russian attack of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th October. He was eight times assailed with the obstinate courage of Russian soldiers, and in vain. Once more in the same position on the memorable day of the 15th of October, which saw the Turkish army flying routed to Kars, the "Capitan Pacha" alone held his ground on the left flank, and only retreated

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on Kars the morning after the two days' fighting had been won by the Russians. He commanded our rear guard when we fled with a straggling remnant of the army of Armenia from Kars, and all through justified his reputation. When the Russians, after their overwhelming victory of the pass of Deve-Boyun, tried to storm Erzeroum on the evening of the 9th of November, and captured one of the principal forts commanding the town, the Azizié, it was Mehemet Pacha who, leading the forlorn hope, stormed the tremendous heights, and retook the fortress—saving the town. Had the Azizié remained in the enemy's hands Erzeroum was irretrievably lost. After this he played an important part in the defence on the second attempt to storm the town three days later at eight in the evening; and I recollect well, when the raindrops of the heavy storm-shower were flashing like gold in the unintermitting blaze of the heavy guns and the long musketry fire lines, the voice of Mehemet Pacha was to be heard cheering the men on the eastern ramparts. He was the life and soul of the defence of Erzeroum. He caught the fatal epidemic raging there, and expired a week after I left the place. So much *in memoriam* of the bravest soldier of the army of Armenia.

The Persian courier further stated that he believed the Russians had occupied Erzeroum in pursuance of the terms of the armistice, and that the French consul had been allowed to send his official despatches unopened across the investing lines some time previously. The snow was deep, all but impassable, when he came over the Kop and Zigana Daghs. This was hardly news; the same state of affairs prevailed when I came over the same road. Other news from the interior there is none, save that the road to Trebizond still continues in the same undefended state as before. Not a man, not a gun, not a breastwork, to impede a Russian advance to the coast when spring suns shall have lessened the snow drifts on the mountains.

I unconsciously enter on this theme of defence, inspired by the opinions expressed freely around me, to the effect that the armistice has only been signed for the purpose of getting over a weather crisis, and that the combat is to begin—

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perhaps with a wider scope—in the coming spring. Such, at least, is the local belief, possibly inspired by the wish. In fact, most probably. I am hardly surprised that such ideas have taken hold of men's minds in Armenia. Few though may be the serious thinkers in it, they have instinctively learned to be antipathetic to a policy which has wrought nought but a long-lived sufferance, coupled with periodic disasters, for a country whose climate, products, and inhabitants fit it for a better fate. There are traditions of a better time, before the Osmanli descended from the wilds; and there are remnants of a past civilization which the race dominant to-day has never been able to reconstruct or replace.

Taken individually, I do not esteem Armenians; and I speak from a long and painful intercourse with them. Whether this unlovable character be the result induced by long subordination to ruthless masters or not, I can hardly say. A dominant race has generally all the admired virtues, the subjected one the reverse. I only know that from the point of view of modern civilization, the Armenian seems to me infinitely more adapted to modern progress than the race which to-day controls his destiny. The faults of a dominant race are generally overlooked or palliated; but the moment force begins to fail, the moment Prince Bismarck's policy of "blood and iron" can no longer be carried into effect, a microscope-like observation is brought to bear on its defaults. Whatever may have been the merits of Osmanli militarism in the past—and no doubt in this respect the Turks were as admirable as their synchronous rivals, I don't suppose their warmest admirers can say that they contributed one atom to the immense scientific, if not social, progress of the past fifty years. Towards the "woman's suffrage" they certainly did not contribute much. "An incarnation of military force" the Ottomans once were, unmistakably, up to the day when John Sobieski overthrew them under the walls of Vienna, and for many a long day after; an incarnation of what we call progress they certainly never were — possibly never will be.

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□ 'VILLAGE OF HAMSI KEUI (SLOPES OF ZIGANA MOUNTAINS), *January 25th.*—Even after the commencement of the evil turn things took here for the Turkish army after the fatal retreat of the 8th October, I could scarcely have believed matters would arrive at their present pitch. Armenia is virtually, if not absolutely, in Russian hands. The last army which held the province in the name of the Sultan is reduced to the condition of a besieged garrison, without even a hope of succour. Pestilence and fever are rife in Erzeroum, and the little fanaticism that sustained the soldiery has long since given place to that hopeless despair, the natural reaction of a forced enthusiasm.

I had always believed that Mohammedan feeling was a much deeper one than circumstances have shown it to be. Intense it is at moments, but, like most similar feelings, very apt to burn itself out. I should scarce have had the courage to say so much on such a question did not the circumstances compel me to see the situation more vividly than falls to the lot of most people. I write these reflections in a wretched village on the northern slopes of the Zigana Mountains. They are inspired by what is daily, hourly, passing before me.

At Baiburt, the last place of any importance which remained to the Turks on the Trebizond road, was a large depôt of convalescent soldiers. They had already passed the ordeal of the passage of the Kop Dagh, and the "natural selection" which took place was appalling to witness. The village whence I date my letter was once among the most flourishing in Armenia. Nine months ago, when I passed through it on my way to Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha's head-quarters, it was replete with activity and life. Now one sees empty homesteads. The doors bang to and fro with each passing snow-gust, and the magpie and scald-crow are the usual occupants. The inhabitants have fled, not before the Russians, but before the Turks. And yet they are Turks themselves. But even Mohammedan fanaticism and resignation have their limits. The first Turkish battalions which marched along that fatal road were received with a boundless enthusiasm. Turks through love, Armenians through fear, gave them welcome, and food and shelter were at the disposition of them all.

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But when, during long months, there was a daily passage of regiments and carriers, the inhabitants could no longer sustain the burden. It was well to welcome a few thousand men during some weeks; but when the same thing went on for months, there came a moment when even Mohammedan patience gave way. Now the best houses are deserted.

The petrified city of Eastern story is no bad embodiment of what exists here. Here and there a few melancholy inhabitants remain, too poor to fly. I have found a lodging where a kind of thick quilt serves as a mattress. It is laid on a floor of rough-beaten earth. The winter leaden light comes in through the patched pyramidal roof of wooden "shingle." The severity of the weather forbids opening of door or window, and glass or even paper are unknown luxuries; and we live in a gloom as black as the political situation. It is the house of a small shopkeeper, who ekes out a miserable living by selling cigarette paper and thick sour milk to the fortunate travellers who have a couple of pence to expend.

It is but ten minutes ago that a poor soldier, and invalid, one of the wretched band sent off from the Baiburt depôt, has been at the door. He begged in the name of Allah to be let in out of the withering storm outside. He vowed that he had not a farthing, and that he was dying. He had been wounded at the disastrous combat of the Aladja Dagh. In the hospital he had caught the typhus epidemic. He was a human ruin. Turkish peasants are proverbially kindly and charitable; and yet, despite the tears that ran down the furrowed war-worn cheeks of the tottering soldier, he was turned away from the door, away into the withering storm. This will give an idea of the state of affairs in Armenia, when the compatriot and co-religionist cannot possibly meet with a more cordial reception. Despair is in every heart; and when I try to console the people I meet by telling them of the "fortune of war," and so forth, they shake their heads sadly, and tell me they know that all is lost.

I have already written about the horrible system of sending off sick men, tottering on their feet, across the snowy wastes of the Kop Dagh. I thought that was the extreme of their trials. I have since rode with difficulty over the Vavouk

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mountains, and over the peaks of the Zigana, more than 13,000 feet high. In a climate like this—a Siberian one in winter, a burning desert in summer, the snow lies from six to ten feet high. I have found myself on the edge of a precipice where the rock went down sheer 1,000 feet. Myself and horse were literally buried in the snow-drift. The animal's head was just above the snow, and I on his back buried to the waist. The horse snorted wildly at the situation, and more wildly still when a couple of unfortunate carriers struggled past, dragging after them the bleeding skins of their beasts, fallen dead of fatigue in these dreadful mountains.

Every one is so poor that, even when a wretched mule falls exhausted under the unconscionable load of petroleum barrels and alcoholic solution of mastic, which seems to constitute the main cargo of these mountain caravans, before the animal has yet ceased to breathe, his hide is torn roughly off, and the poor muleteers wade for weary miles, dragging after them the bloody load to sell it for sixpence at the next khan. I had seen the red traces in the snow previously; and I had been at a loss to explain them. It was only when I saw the sad reality that I could possibly imagine it. I counted over 100 raw carcases of horses and mules during a day's struggle through blinding sleet, and along cliffs were the blood turned cold to look below.

I enter into these details by way of expressing strongly the nature of the road over which a Russian army must pass to come to Trebizond. The road is the same up to the end of April. Military men here consider that anything like a direct march on Trebizond is out of the question. The authorities believe that the forward Russian movement will be made by way of Ersingan, the great centre of Armenian agricultural prosperity. Thence, attacking columns, having reposed after the passage of the difficult part of the country beyond, can march to this town, where there is not a vestige of fortification, where there are no troops, and where the Russians would be received with open arms. It is an Armenian town, and I have more than once given my opinion that the "Irmeni" population only wait the advent of the

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Czar's legions to welcome them. This is an opinion in which I think Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha will agree with me. At least, he told me so more than once.

□ TREBIZOND, *January 27th.*—I have got here. I am thankful for small mercies; not that this is a small one—to come over the mountains, where one's horse wades in shifting snowdrift. I am more than ever confirmed in my belief that the base of operations for the spring campaign will be principally at Ersingan. As I came through Baiburt, hundreds of boxes of old muzzleloading rifles, Enfield and Minié, were being sent off on camels to arm the population, and prevent the Cossack flying columns from ranging with impunity far and wide. For the moment there will be nothing. Erzeroum will fall. It is only a matter of time. I leave for Batoum on the first occasion to see an old acquaintance there, Dervisch Pacha, with whom I made the Albanian campaign. I return immediately, and start for the new base at Ersingan; meantime, I can only add that, notwithstanding the arrival of a celebrated Mussulman saint at the same place, and the concentration of all available Bashi-Bazouks there, the situation is, to my mind, a lost one.

□ TREBIZOND, *February 2nd.*—Upon reaching this town after my fatiguing and really dangerous journey over the mountains intervening between this and Erzeroum, I finally fixed upon either Batoum or Ersingan as the proper scene of action. The road to Ersingan is as long and trying as that to Erzeroum, and besides, continued rumours of immediate peace negotiations and suspension of arms decided me to forego for the moment visiting the spot which local tradition declares to have been the site of the Garden of Eden. I finally decided on going to Batoum. The great question became how to get there. The population and authorities of Trebizond seemed absolutely ignorant of how matters were progressing with Dervisch Pacha's command, but all seemed to agree that the Russians already occupied the road which, running along the shore, connects this town with my intended destination. Besides, I was too well acquainted

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with the activity of the Georgian and Circassian irregular horsemen in the Russian service to trust myself on a two days' journey over a deserted road, admitted to be abandoned by the Turkish troops.

I waited in vain for a war ship or transport steamer. For seven days there has been no such means of transmit either way; and I was beginning to despair when our excellent Consul here, Mr. Billiotti, this evening held out hopes of Government vessels starting to-morrow. Should any such good fortune await me, I will start at once for the border town, which has been much neglected by correspondents, owing to their necessary absence at more important scenes of action. The telegraph to Batoum still exists, or is supposed to exist, as the telegraph people accept despatches for that place; but as far as I am able to judge, this existence is only as regards high officials, as no answers ever come to private messages.

It was only through the European newspapers that we learned about the torpedo fight in the bay; and now, though the news of heavy fighting around Batoum has leaked out, it is impossible to learn definitely how the thing ended. One thing is sure, the Russians, strongly reinforced, attacked the town on the southern side on the 30th of January, and were repulsed, the Turks say, with heavy loss. In official quarters rumour says that the fighting was still going on yesterday evening; and the absence of news, in view of the existence of the telegraph, would seem to imply that the Osmanlis had not had the best of it.

It seems strange that such fighting should be in progress so many days after the signature of the armistice, which the last copy of the *Levant Herald* received here says took place on the 26th ultimo. Still, a similar instance came under my notice in Herzegovina, where Mukhtar Pacha informed me he was officially unaware of the armistice towards the end of 1876, long after the Montenegrins were informed of it, and only learned it definitely through a message from the enemy. I recollect he attributed the delay to Dervisch Pacha, then commanding in Albania, and who now directs the defence of Batoum. It may be that this last-named

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officer has been informed on the subject of the armistice, and the Russians as well. There are some uncharitable people here who hint that the enemy acted advisedly, and with a view of taking the garrison by surprise, and getting into their possession one more material guarantee for territorial concession.

It seems that the telegraphic communications with Europe are interrupted, at least direct ones. When I learned the news of the Batoum fighting I sent a despatch to the telegraph bureau, accompanied by the usual sum of money. It was returned to me with the statement that instead of one franc per word, two francs should be paid, as communications beyond Constantinople were at an end. On further application I learned that communications direct with Pera existed, and that *viâ* Syria and Egypt I might send messages direct, their rapidity of transmission not being guaranteed. This extra route accounted for the doubled tariff. I cannot make out at what place the wires are cut; but probably the interruption has something to do with the Russian advance or other military operations.

Several large cannon, forwarded from Constantinople at the commencement of the war, and which have ever since been lying on the wharf here, are now being returned to the place whence they came. They were originally destined for the ramparts of Erzeroum; but owing to the maladministration of the ordnance department, which forwarded with them gun-carriages adapted for pieces of a different calibre and construction, they could not be made use of. In case of a bombardment of Erzeroum, this glaring piece of mismanagement may seriously affect the issue of the operations; and it is probably only one specimen of many such that have never come to light.

At the commencement of the campaign, Mukhtar Pacha, foreseeing a prolongation of the campaign into the winter, taking time by the forelock, commenced ordering sheepskin great-coats for his troops.

"There is no use," he said, "trusting to departments at home to have the necessary garments provided in time. I have accordingly given the necessary orders to many different

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private establishments; and to each I have given an order for the entire amount I require. In this way I hope to have a chance of getting something like what is necessary in due time.

And yet the poor marshal was disappointed. Out of all his orders he got a few hundred coats; and it was in the depth of winter, when freezing to death and frostbite became alarmingly frequent, that the skin coats were being roughly manufactured on a scale entirely inadequate to the necessities of the moment. Between negligent war departments in Constantinople and unconfiding contractors elsewhere, who, sceptical as to the reception of their money, declined the advantageous contracts offered them, the Ottoman army in the provinces has suffered much.

As I telegraphed yesterday, a messenger from Erzeroum has arrived here, having obtained permission to cross the investing lines, bearing consular despatches. He brings word that even in the plains close by the town the snow is so deep as to render travelling over them all but impossible. The cold is intense, and houses are being demolished on a large scale to procure firing for the garrison and population. Provisions of every kind are enormously dear, and, notwithstanding the cold, the typhus epidemic is still raging. At one of the Zaptieh (gendarme) guard houses on the Zigana mountain, six of its occupants were frozen to death. When I had passed near the same place on my way here two men lay dead on the snow, and some others, overcome by the somnolence produced by excessive cold, were being borne off by their companions. The messenger also brings tidings that the Russians have confined themselves to blockading Erzeroum, having attempted neither bombardment nor assault since the investment was completed. Neither has any further advance taken place in the Baiburt or Ersingan direction. In fact the Siberian severity of the weather seems to have completely paralyzed all active operations. Were it not for the terrible winter climate Armenia would long since have been overrun, and even this town would be in Russian hands. To me it seems inexplicable why a town of the importance of Trebizond has, up to this moment, been left in such a defenceless condi-

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tion, both on the sea and land sides. There is a tumble-down mediæval castle, and a scarcely more efficient sea battery. Anything like the defences of Erzeroum and Kars does not exist, and the garrison consists of a few hundred artillerymen. Ships of war or gunboats there are none to guard the harbour. A couple of mortar-boats could at any moment run in and inflict tremendous damage on the town before a cruiser could arrive. I am only surprised that up to the present nothing of the kind has been attempted, especially as it seems that the torpedo boats of the enemy have been distinguishing themselves at Batoum.

As regards the population, it would be hard to imagine anything more politically languid than the spirits of the majority. Armenians and Greeks predominate. They are solely commercial; and, apart from their traditional dislike to the Ottomans, their trading instincts would make them welcome any one whose administrations would stimulate trade and promote enterprise. But both these races, here at least, have a violent dislike to warlike proceedings; and I doubt whether on one side or the other, for the existing Government, or even for their own interests, they could be got to bear arms. In the interior I found much more of a decided party spirit than here. The comparative proximity of Trebizond to Europe, the continued influx of strangers, and the influence of trade, have combined to produce a cosmopolitan indifference to nationality which would render it a most desirable acquisition for "those about to annex." The Russian peace terms, as published here, create no feeling of animosity or disgust.

"Do what you please," say the people, "but we beg you to let us attend to our business."

As I have already written in a previous letter, the feeling of depression among the Mussulman population of the province is extreme. They have taken it into their heads that they are thoroughly beaten, and with characteristic fatalism are prepared for any changes which may ensue. Of course I speak of the masses, not of the official set, who, as in every country in the world, cling to the last to the fortunes of the central administration. For my own part, I can scarce

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believe in peace, unless all the Rusian demands be freely granted, and that they will be I doubt. Russia has already too sure a hold on Armenia, and is too near the consummation of its conquest, to lightly relax her grasp. An armistice, with interchange of courtesies between the belligerent troops, will make the long winter months pass much more agreeably for both parties. The Power which may have troops at its disposal can march them tranquilly to the front, and then the spring campaign can be opened, to the satisfaction, it is to be hoped, of all parties.

The foregoing brings to a close the series of letters descriptive of the campaign in Asia. From this point the question of the destiny of Armenia is transferred from the hands of the military commanders to those of the diplomatists. What arrangements were finally arrived at between Russian and Turkish plenipotentiaries with regard to territory in Asia, may be seen by reference to Article XIX. of the Treaty of San Stefano.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

PERIOD OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

Syra.—Anxiety regarding the Peace Conditions.—Orders for Cessation of Hostilities.—The Turkish Chamber.—Debate on Massacres at Bourgas.—At Mukhtar Pacha's Headquarters.—Abandonment of the Turkish Lines of Defence.—Skobeleff's Rapid March.—Difficulties in carrying out the Terms of the Armistice.—Server Pacha's Policy.—Final Evacuation of the Neutral Territory.—The Brink of a Second War.—The English Fleet.—Adrianople.—Helplessness of the Population.—Spirit of Brigandage and Vendetta.—Details of the Evacuation of the City.—Particulars of the Negotiations.—Life in Adrianople.—Habits and Feelings of the Russian Soldiers.—Ill-treatment of English Surgeons by Captain Baranoffsky.—Investigation ordered by the Grand Duke.—The Fortifications of Adrianople.—Affairs in Constantinople.—Telegraphic Communication with Europe interrupted.—No News from Europe.—Russians at Rodosto.—Action of Greece.—Attitude of Austria.—Office of Grand Vizier abolished.—Achmet Vevyk Pacha appointed First Member.—Alarming Number of Armed Irregular Troops in the City.—Street Scenes.—The Stamboulee and the Old-fashioned Turk.—Mr. Palgrave's Theory.—The Gipsy Element.—The Refugees.—Open Sale of Plunder.—The Massacres at Viza and in its Neighbourhood.—Terrible Details.—Entry of the British Fleet into the Straits and Return to Besika Bay.—Russian Generals in Constantinople.—Turkish Ill-feeling towards England.—Further Scenes in the City.—Englishmen robbed by Pomaks.—The Terms of the Treaty.—The Indemnity.—Dismissal of the Chamber of Deputies.—The Greeks.—Their Claims to Consideration.—Affairs at Gallipoli.—The Defences of the Isthmus.—Faith of the Turks in British Intervention.—Zabet Pacha.—The Russians at Rodosto.—Dearness of Provisions.—Distribution of Bread.—Surrender of Rustchuk to General Todleben.—Condition of the Town.—Departure of General Todleben for Russia.

Since the fall of Plevna the necessity, under which the Turkish Government laboured, of making peace had become to dispassionate observers of the situation more and more evident. The rapid and triumphant advance of General Gourko, the successful passage of the Trajan and Shipka Passes by the Russian forces, and the defeat and capture of great part of Suleiman Pacha's army at length convinced the most fanatical among

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the war party in Constantinople that resistance no longer offered any hope of success. In the latter part of December the Turkish authorities had applied to the English Cabinet to "convey overtures of peace" to the Russian Government. This step, however, produced no result except a suggestion that the Turks, if desirous of peace, should send to the headquarters of the Grand Duke Nicholas negotiators having power to treat on behalf of Turkey. The arrival of Server Pacha and Namyk Pacha, who were charged with that mission, at Kezanlik, and the arrangement of the armistice, have already been referred to. Almost simultaneously with their arrival Adrianople was abandoned, and that city, with an immense amount of war material and 200 heavy guns, fell, as already described, into the hands of General Skobeleff's troops without the loss of a man—Suleiman Pacha and his shattered army, hotly pursued by General Gourko, being, after severe engagements, driven into the Rhodope mountains, whence a remnant made their way to the sea, and subsequently embarked for Constantinople.

The military and political events of this period, and the effect produced on public opinion in England by the delay and secrecy of the negotiators, and by the continued advance of the Russian troops, will be found fully described in the correspondence included in the present chapter:—

:: SYRA, *February 5th.*—A Government notice has been issued requiring the exclusive use of the European telegraph for despatches.

The anxiety during the last three days has been intense to learn whether the armistice and the conditions of peace had been accepted. There was an announcement in the journals, even on Saturday, of the most positive kind that peace had already been signed. It was not until Tuesday that it became known that nothing whatever had been heard of the delegates. Complete instructions were only sent on the 24th. The telegraph was interrupted, and there was no news until

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yesterday. Everybody was waiting with increasing anxiety for news. It was reported that the Russians were advancing on all sides. A long council was held on Wednesday, and the Sultan decided to send two aides-de-camp, under flags of truce, conveying a renewal of the orders to the Delegates to sign the armistice on the conditions already submitted and agreed upon. The Sultan the same day telegraphed personally and direct to the Emperor of Russia, informing him that instructions had been sent, and urging the earliest possible conclusion of peace. Yesterday the Emperor replied, and at four in the afternoon the expected news arrived.

The satisfaction was universal, especially among the Turks, who had been harassed by the double fear of the advancing Russians and the pillage of the capital. An official announcement stated that the Plenipotentiaries had telegraphed that the Protocol, which had been framed relative to the bases of peace, and the armistice, had been signed. Owing to the destruction of the telegraph the message was brought by special train to Cherkessken, twenty miles beyond Chorlou. The same train had brought the Plenipotentiaries and the Russian officers to Adrianople. The despatches of the Plenipotentiaries were then transmitted by messenger to Hademkoi, whence they were telegraphed to Constantinople. Immediately they were received the Ministers went in a body to the Sultan, and a council was held. It is rumoured that certain modifications, made by the Grand Duke Nicholas in the original propositions concerning the evacuation of Silistria, are inserted in the propositions already forwarded. Nothing, however, is certainly known.

Orders have been sent to both armies to cease hostilities. Most people regard the war as entirely ended beyond the possibility of revival, unless Austria and England intervene. Telegrams which arrived last night lead to the impression that such intervention would occur, but they will probably turn out, like previous ones, to be grossly exaggerated. Certainly neither the German nor the Austrian Embassy acknowledges that there is any difference of opinion between them or Russia.

Hundreds of Turkish houses are filled with refugees. There

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is great dread of a Russian advance. Turks are receiving protection from Europeans. I have known cases where the former have asked that they should be protected not only from the Russians, but the Circassians and other rabble now crowding the streets, mosques, and other buildings. It is an enormous relief to all that Constantinople is not to be besieged, the fear of internal troubles greatly exceeding that of the Russians.

Baker Pacha arrived from Gallipoli on Wednesday quite well. After leaving a division of Suleiman's remnant of an army near Dedogach, he placed troops in position at Gallipoli. Mehemet Ali has been appointed Commandant at Constantinople. It is believed that he will make attempts to disarm the Circassians, who are still pouring in with plunder from Roumelia, creating great alarm.

In the Turkish Chamber, the Greek members for Mytelene and Smyrna called attention to the massacre of the population of a Christian village near Bourgas, and presented official depositions stating the facts. The village was called Stathopulo. During the panic caused by the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks the Governor of Bourgas confided the care of Stathopulo to an Albanian detachment of regular troops. When the Albanians were thus constituted the guardians of the village, they demanded a ransom of two thousand pounds from the Greek inhabitants. It being impossible to pay, the villagers sent messengers to the Governor of Bourgas. When the Albanians heard this they became furious, and began the attack. Then commenced, says the Mytelene deputy, supporting himself by official documents, the suffering, or rather the martyrdom, of the unfortunate population. The troops pursued the inhabitants with firearms and yataghans, and the terrified people took refuge in the church. The Albanians besieged the building for three days, during which they constantly fired upon the occupants. Only 200 out of 800 succeeded in escaping. The rest were cruelly massacred. The women were dishonoured. Even little girls of ten were not spared. The Chamber decided that urgent measures should be adopted. The information given in Constantinople by the refugees from Rodosto and Bourgas has had an

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excellent effect in bringing the truth to light respecting the doings of the Bashi-Bazouks, Albanians, and Circassians.

It will be remembered that Mukhtar Pacha was recalled from Armenia shortly before the date of the following letter, in order to take the command of the defences of Constantinople:—

† KADIKOI, HEADQUARTERS OF MUKHTAR PACHA, *February 7th.*—I arrived here last night with Count Keller, General Skobeleff's chief of staff, who came in with a flag of truce to arrange the lines of demarcation and the neutral ground between the two armies during the armistice. General Skobeleff's headquarters will be at Tchataldja until the signature of peace. His cavalry arrived there yesterday, and he himself will arrive there to-day with the head of his infantry column. General Gourko's advance guard will arrive in Silivri to-day, on the coast of the Sea of Marmora, and he himself is at Rodosto now. It is probable his headquarters will be at Silivri, and that the Grand Duke's headquarters will be at Rodosto.

There has been some difficulty in getting the Turks to evacuate the ground stipulated in the Protocol, and although it was agreed that they should evacuate all their positions by February 6th, they have not done so yet. It was to see if they meant to do so or not, as well as to arrange the lines of demarcation, that Count Keller came here—in fact, Mukhtar Pacha had not until a late hour last night received any information about the terms of the armistice from Constantinople, and thought the two armies were simply to remain where they were at the moment the armistice was signed, and he was surprised to find the Russian troops continually advancing.

When General Strukoff, of Skobeleff's cavalry, arrived the day before yesterday at Silivri, he found the Turks still there, and they at first refused to leave the place, as they had no orders to that effect. It was not till he brought up a battery and threatened to fire on them that they finally consented to leave. It was stipulated in the Protocol that the Russian

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lines should be from Bujuk Tcheknejeh, on the Sea of Marmora, along the right bank of the Kara Su River to the Lake of Derkos, on the Black Sea; and the Turkish line from Kujuk Tcheknejeh, on the Sea of Marmora, to the village of Ak Bunar, on the Black Sea, leaving a space of about seven miles between the lines as neutral ground. The village of Derkos is on neutral ground, as is the whole Turkish line of defence, and the fortifications of Bujuk Tcheknejeh. The Turks really abandon their last line of defence, and leave Constantinople at the mercy of the Russian line of Kujuk Tcheknejeh, not fortified, and they are not allowed to work on them by the terms of the armistice.

In consenting to this arrangement Server and Namyk Pachas must either have been completely panic-stricken, thinking that the only way to keep the Russians from Constantinople was as thus to throw themselves on the generosity of the Grand Duke, or else, having abandoned all hope, they wished to give the Russians a proof of their sincerity in thus needlessly abandoning their last line of defence. The fact is, the Russians could not have attacked these lines for two weeks yet, as they would not have had up enough infantry to do so, and the positions are the most formidable I have ever seen.

The valley of Kara Su, far above Tchataldja, is nothing but a marsh, crossed by one or two causeways, over which no troops can pass for two months yet, and it is further shortened by the Lake of Derkos. The possible line of attack cannot now be over seven or eight miles long, not more than a third of the length of Osman's lines at Plevna, and Mukhtar must have thirty or forty thousand men, good, bad, and indifferent. It seems to me the Turks might have held this line at any hazard, and the Russians could not have insisted on its evacuation for the reason that they could not be ready to attack for two weeks. In their possession this line would have put the Turks on a much better footing for the peace negotiations. However, they have abandoned all idea of holding it, and Mukhtar received last night orders to abandon it. He has only asked for a delay of three days to remove his heavy artillery and stores, which, over the roads as they now are, is almost impossible.

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† HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL SKOBELEFF, TCHATALDJA, *February 9th.*—We have at last come to a halt here, after a march that for rapidity and daring has rarely been equalled. General Skobeleff, after the fight of Shenova, near Shipka, where he compelled Wessel Pacha to surrender his whole army, left Kezanlik on January 15th, and his advanced guard reached here on February 5th, having made the distance, 275 miles, in twenty days. He performed the distance from Kezanlik to Semenli Junction, on the Philippopolis and Yamboli Railways, fifty-five miles, in forty hours, and from Kezanlik to Adrianople, 100 miles, in four days. When we compare the rapid marching of Skobeleff and Gourko during this period of the campaign, fighting through their enemy's country, half devastated by flying Turks, with the slow, heavy movements of the army across Roumania, a friendly country, in the beginning of the war, one can hardly believe it is the same army.

Skobeleff's march from Adrianople here has been almost as quick as from Kezanlik. The troops marched along the line of railway without baggage and artillery, which are coming on by rail. They lived partly on the supplies found in the country, and prepared by Strukoff, and partly on provisions brought from Adrianople by rail. At Lulé Burgas Skobeleff set all the bakeries going, and found they could produce 12,000 loaves per day, so that he was enabled to furnish his troops with fresh bread every other day. No fighting occurred except a smart cavalry skirmish at the station of Tchorlou, where the Russian advance overtook the Turkish rear guard.

The rapidity of movement was not in the least relaxed, even after the signature of the armistice. Although the Turkish general had received no orders from Constantinople, and had therefore transmitted no orders to his troops to evacuate the territory, as agreed upon in the armistice, the Russians pushed forward and drove the Turks out by threats and force everywhere up to the line of demarcation. At Silivri, Strukoff had, as I informed you, to bring up a battery and to threaten to fire before the Turkish commander would consent to move, and then he did so only after putting

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in a protest against what he called a violation of the armistice.

The fact is, the Turks had already violated the armistice in not fulfilling the conditions agreed upon. The neutral ground is not yet evacuated by them, although Mukhtar Pacha has promised that it shall be by the 10th; Skobeleff having informally granted that delay, while reserving to himself the right to watch the proceedings step by step, and see that they are really carried out. He has informed Mukhtar that unless he sees that the evacuation is taking place, he will consider himself authorized by this continued violation of the armistice to occupy the neutral ground, and seize whatever war material, cannon, &c., he may find there. As Skobeleff has not yet enough troops up to attack these formidable positions, this threat is what the Americans call a game of bluff. The Grand Duke considers it of the greatest importance to have these positions evacuated at once, for reasons which I will explain, and Skobeleff is trying to get it done by means of threats and bluster in lieu of force, which he has not yet got at his disposal.

It is a somewhat amusing and exciting game, and we are looking forward to the result with anxiety. The Turks assure the Russians they have 85,000 men behind these lines. The Russians assure the Turks that they have 100,000 ready to attack upon a moment's notice, and are only restrained from doing so by consideration for them. As by the time this is published the matter will be decided one way or other, this account of the situation here can do no harm. From what I saw of Mukhtar Pacha, however, I believe he was acting in good faith, and that he actually gave orders for the evacuation the night we were at Kadikoi, where he says for the first time he received notice from his Government. Why he did not receive orders sooner I am unable to say, unless it be on the ground that this is the usual manner of proceeding with the Turks, or else that there was hesitation in Constantinople in accepting the terms agreed upon by Server Pacha.

If it be asked why the Russians are so anxious to have these lines evacuated now that peace is imminent, the answer is simple. Peace is not certain until it is signed. In the mean-

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time they have the possibility of English interference continually before their eyes, an event which a discussion of the conditions of peace might still bring about. Now with the lines of Bujuk Tcheknejeh in their possession, as they virtually will be if the Turks evacuate them, Constantinople is practically as much in their hands as if there were sentinels at the doors of St. Sofia.

The railway signal posts mark seventy kilomètres from Stamboul. The distance by road is fifty-five, as the railway is very crooked. In case of a declaration of war by England, Skobeleff, who has now four divisions, can throw the whole force on to the heights behind Constantinople in forty-eight hours; for it might be safely said that the Turks, having given such a proof of their desire for peace as the abandonment of this line of defence, may be counted upon to offer no further resistance to the Russians, even should England declare war in their favour. I believe Server Pacha was really in earnest when he said the other day that in future Turkey would be the ally of Russia. His reasoning is simple and logical. Even though Lord Beaconsfield meant to interfere on behalf of Turkey, as undoubtedly Server believed, it is now too late to save Turkey by that means. Whatever the result of that interference, whether favourable or unfavourable to the Russian arms, the Ottoman Empire would perish in the struggle, whereas, by making peace with Russia now, something can be saved from the wreck. Russia is evidently not yet prepared for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and if the Porte can be brought completely under Russian influence, and can be turned into a faithful ally, there is no reason why what will remain of the Empire after this war should perish at all, protected as it will be by Russia. This is Server Pacha's line of reasoning, and it is not without logic. This is why he has given such a proof of his sincerity to Russia by giving up the last line of defence, thus putting Turkey beyond the possibility of further resistance, even though England should now declare war against Russia.

Tchataldja is a pretty prosperous little village, with many fine, even elegant, houses. It is half Turkish, half Greek, but the Turkish population has nearly all fled. Upon the arrival of

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Count Keller with a flag of truce, the Greek Bishop called upon him, and in presence of two Turkish officers said he prayed for the health of the Emperor Alexander, and for the officers and soldiers of the army who had come to deliver the country from its oppressors. As according to the bases of peace proposed by Russia this part of the Empire remains to Turkey, I fear the poor Bishop will find the country rather hot for him after peace is made and the Russians go away.

There has been snow here for the last three or four nights, but it melts during the day. The sun is shining brightly, but the roads are in an impassable condition, and they will probably remain so for some time. The headquarters of the Grand Duke are, it is said, to be removed to Silivri, on the Sea of Marmora, instead of Rodosto. Silivri is nearer Constantinople. Count Keller and Thair Bey, accompanied by Lieutenant Green, of the American army, started yesterday to go round the lines of demarcation on both sides.

† TCHATALDJA, *February 11th.*—The evacuation of the neutral territory is completed. All Mukhtar's army has retired behind the lines of Bujuk Tcheknejeh, but the heavy artillery still remains in position, and a good deal of war material is still on neutral ground, because the Turks cannot remove it. Skobeleff has, I believe, told Mukhtar to at least remove the guns from their platforms. Constantinople may be virtually considered in the hands of the Russians, just as much as if they were already in the place. They have the self-restraint not to enter, that is all. Skobeleff, while going over the lines of delimitation the other day, was near enough to see the place. He and the whole of his staff, with the escort, sat on their horses and gazed on the capital for some minutes. There was some disappointment expressed that they should not have been allowed to march in, but all are in general very glad the war is over.

It would seem that we were on the very brink of a second war without knowing it. I know as a fact that before the armistice was signed Russia had decided that the English fleet coming to the Bosphorus should be the signal for the Russain army to march in, and that if any English troops

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were found anywhere in the Turkish positions, to attack them. It was further decided to occupy Gallipoli, and every disposition was taken for that purpose. Now it turned out that the English fleet actually had orders to go to the Bosphorus at that very moment. Had the order not been countermanded the result would certainly have been a collision between the two forces, and a war. It was a close shave.

Skobeleff only received news of the armistice at Tchorlou, from which point the Sea of Marmora is visible. Everybody is glad that it has ended so; and now that the first disappointment is over, there is no desire expressed to go to Constantinople at all. As soon as peace is signed Skobeleff marches back to Adrianople.

† TCHATALDJA, *February 12th.*—We have just had another scare. News was received here that the English fleet was on its way to the Bosphorus. Skobeleff instantly informed the headquarters, and had orders for concentrating his troops at a point where they could strike at a moment's notice in case orders were received to that effect. The sky was threatening for a short time. Then the news came that the Turks had refused to let the fleet pass, and that it was waiting orders at the mouth of the Dardanelles. This news raised a laugh, but the position is still regarded as threatening. Skobeleff's troops will be to-morrow at points that will enable them to cross the line and occupy the Turkish positions in the neutral ground in two hours. He can put two divisions on the high ground just behind Constantinople in thirty-six hours. I may remark that a division of the Guards has been given to him, and that he has now three divisions and two brigades of sharpshooters under his command, really four divisions in all, besides artillery and cavalry.

As our news is nearly twenty-four hours old, it is likely the order for sending the fleet has once more been countermanded, otherwise we should have heard of its arrival by this time. The coming of the fleet to the Bosphorus would probably not now be regarded by Russia as a signal for war as it would have been before the armistice, but it would be a very serious matter, nevertheless. It is too late for the war party now to

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talk of not believing the Emperor's promises regarding Constantinople, and urging this as a reason for sending the fleet. Russia virtually has Constantinople. If the Emperor refuses to withdraw his troops when peace is signed, it will be time enough to send the fleet and go to war. Now such a step would be folly, as it would give Russia a pretext for entering Constantinople, and, in that case, the Turks would to all present appearances fight, if they fought at all, on the side of Russia. The Turks now swear by the Russians.

In the subjoined letters from the correspondent who accompanied General Gourko's expedition we return to Adrianople :—

+ ADRIANOPLE, *February 9th.*—Any one who has crossed the Channel, and has felt the ugly motion of the steamer long after landing, can appreciate the sensations caused by the sudden and almost unexpected pause in the turmoil and action of the war. The complex machinery of the campaign has come to a standstill, the noise and tumult have ceased, the life of continual excitement, insecurity, and restlessness has suddenly changed to an emotionless existence. Sure of a roof to shelter us, sure of food for ourselves and horses, no longer forced to struggle with cold or wet, free from the majority of the petty cares of campaigning, life has become tame and commonplace. But the reaction, depressing as it is, does not hold uninterrupted sway, for there are hours when the surge and swell of the war come back to one in all their actual force and vigour. There are moments when the distant rumble of wheels is as inspiriting as the roar of cannon; when the banging of a door or the sound of a hammer is intoxicating like the first irregular rattle of musketry that precedes a fight. So, after the whirl and crash and roar have ended, the echoes still linger in the air, and the pulses quicken at the involuntary reminiscences of the exhilaration of the past eight months spent in active warfare.

I will not say that even the depression of the sudden reaction is altogether disagreeable, for it carries with it a corresponding

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balm, the proof that the terrible tragedy is at last ended. Only those who, as spectators, have so identified themselves with the drama as to fully appreciate the character of the action, can now conceive the strength of the sense of relief that possesses every actor, as the curtain falls on the last of the terrible scenes of the war. It is not so much the incidents of battle, the hardships of the soldiers in the cold, or the wholesale destruction of property which have made the experience of the past month exceedingly exhausting to the nervous force; but it is rather the extreme misery and wretchedness of the thousands of non-combatants that have daily met our eyes since we crossed the Balkans and approached Sofia.

The most sensitive nature gets hardened to the scenes of a battle-field. Though one may at first regret that a peasant's house should burn, one soon warms himself at the flames, without a thought of the owner; but the sufferings of the innocent and helpless appeal to human sympathy with a force which time and experience do not entirely neutralize, and one finds himself turning with a sick heart from freezing and starving women and children, while his horse tramples underfoot unnoticed the shapeless body of a soldier. I have seen the dragoons, whose sabres were still coloured with Turkish blood, dismount and share their rations with half-famished fugitives; and infantrymen, who with great difficulty had made a fire to dry their feet, yield it to the shivering refugees, and with touching tenderness bring the exhausted Turkish women to the fire and give them food and drink. It is the sense of utter helplessness in the presence of all this suffering, the certainty that the majority of these innocent people will perish for the lack of the commonest necessities of existence, the consciousness that this useless waste of human life might have been easily prevented, that is exhausting to the last degree; and I remember nothing of the whole war so inhuman, so fiendish, as the tragedy on the road between Philippopolis and Hermanli, of which we were in part spectators.

In my despatch sent a few days ago I mentioned the fact that we met on the road perhaps 10,000 refugees returning to

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their homes, and spoke also of the attack of the Bulgarians on a train of these unfortunates almost under the eyes of General Gourko. News has now reached us that hundreds of these refugees have been despoiled, and many have been killed or have died on the road before reaching Philippopolis. Although there is no official proof of the truth of this statement, this is no argument against the correctness of the report, because there is no high official who to my knowledge would interest himself enough to take pains to inquire into the matter. Then, too, the testimony of one of my couriers, who has just come in from Sistova *viâ* Philippopolis, confirms part of the rumour, for he says that there was a great deal of plundering along the highway in the vicinity of the latter town. From what I saw myself, it appeared to me almost certain that these fugitives would never reach their homes.

When the Bulgarians began plundering them in the presence of part of General Gourko's staff it was only with the greatest difficulty that the brigands were dispersed by the officers and soldiers, who attempted to protect the Turks, and every one knew that when we were out of sight the game would begin anew. The villagers were like madmen; the small children caught the contagious spirit, and set upon the Turkish children and pulled the bundles away from them; old hags clawed at the veiled women with all the ferocity of witches, and great hearty men mobbed helpless fugitives, and took from them their last covering, their only food. When we charged among them with the whip they sullenly retired, appearing again on the scene at a new point, and even the strong arm of military authority, wielded without system and spasmodically, was insufficient to prevent effectually the plunder. The thought came to me at the time that if these people have been so oppressed they have learned arrogance and self-assertion with astonishing readiness; and this in the presence of superior physical force and indisputable authority.

It is clear that it was the duty of the general officer who sent these fugitives back to their villages to provide a proper escort to protect them on their journey. This has not, to my knowledge, been done in a single case, and General Kartzoff,

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who commanded the detachment in advance of the main body of General Gourko's troops, sent the immense waggon trains of refugees to the rear, without any visible escort to ensure their safe conduct through a district where it was well known existed a strong feeling of hostility between the two races. To begin with, it was a colossal mistake on the part of the Turks to leave such a small escort with the great bivouac of refugees; they should have either given them no escort at all or else a sufficient body of troops to protect them or to cover their retreat. As it was, there was just enough infantry to begin the fight and to excite the people to defend themselves. It is difficult to say which of the two divisions of that great multitude of peasants are better off—those who fled into the mountains, leaving all their property behind them, or those who fell into the hands of the Russians, and were sent back to their villages. It seems quite probable that complete extermination will be the fate of these refugees, and between exposure, famine, and the Bulgarians they have little hope.

Perhaps it is too much to expect of the Russians to secure good order in the hundreds of villages where Turks and Bulgarians live as neighbours; but it seems a little inconsistent, to put it very mildly, that the result of a war made ostensibly to prevent massacres should be to excite these wholesale slaughters, and that the Russian military Government should be less effective than the lax and irregular system which it has superseded. Of course the Turkish peasants are now in great fear of the Bulgarians, for the latter are all armed, many of them with weapons taken by the Russians from the Turks and given to the Bulgarians, and the former are without means of defence. The spirit of brigandage and vendetta that is excited in the Bulgarians is proved by what I have described along the Philippopolis-Hermanli road. They have even gone so far as to exchange shots with a force of Russian dragoons, in a village in this neighbourhood, and several of them were killed. The lessons they have learnt in the war have not benefited them much. It is plain to see that the large and constantly increasing corps of *vengeurs* have found work enough for their yataghans.

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The occupation of Adrianople was by no means a dramatic finale of the trans-Balkan campaign. When the Turks evacuated the city on the 18th ultimo the troops and most of the munitions were sent to Constantinople, and the Government of the city was left in the hands of the consuls—namely, Messrs. J. E. Blunt, her Majesty's Consul; Ghennadil, Consul for Greece; Saxe, for the Austro-Hungarian Empire; and Flech, for France. At the suggestion of Mr. Blunt, the Turkish authorities had wisely ordered away all the irregular troops before the evacuation, and they left for the protection for the consuls and for the good order of the town a detachment of seventy-two regular soldiers with several officers. On the 19th, Fasso Effendi was appointed by telegraph governor of the town *ad interim*, and in this capacity he presented himself with the consular body and the Greek archbishop to General Stroukoff, who on the 20th occupied a village very near the city. The General, however, refused to recognize any municipal authority, saying there was no longer any Sultan or any Governor, and announced to the consuls that he would appoint a committee of safety, to be composed of one member of every race or sect in the town, saying that he should hold each individual member of committee responsible for the acts of the portion of the inhabitants he represented, and finishing his declaration of the plan proposed for the government of the town in somewhat these words:—"This, gentlemen, I conceive to be the only means of insuring good order in the city, because the Armenians hate the Germans, the Germans the French, the French the Italians, the Italians the Greeks, the Greeks the Bulgarians, and the Bulgarians —they hate everybody."

This committee was accordingly appointed, and a native police force relieved the patrol organized by the consuls, and personally conducted by them during the interim between the departure of the Turks and the arrival of the Russians. General Skobeleff came by rail on the 21st, General Gourko four days later, and the Grand Duke on the 26th. The triumphal entry of the Commander-in-Chief was not a remarkably brilliant spectacle, nor was there noticeable enthusiasm in the crowds that assembled on the way; this

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was partly due, doubtless, to the rain which fell heavily at the time, and partly to the nature of the people, who are not disposed to any visible expression of emotion.

With the occupation of Adrianople the rapid forward movement did not cease, and Skobeleff's troops were on the road again after a pause of a day or two, forming the central column of the advance towards Constantinople. General Gourko's infantry had come in with empty haversacks; marching from twenty to forty-five kilomètres a day, they had long since left far behind the provision trains, and had been living for some days as only a Russian soldier knows how to live. Bread is to them a necessity, and how they have managed to eke out six days of two-thirds regular ration during ten days of marching and fighting, as they did between Sofia and Philippopolis, is a problem I have not yet been able to solve. Between Philippopolis and Adrianople the bread ration was short in a like proportion, but the soldiers managed to live.

Of course, General Gourko could not keep on any further without resting his men and awaiting the transport trains, so his advance *viâ* Lulé Burgas to Rodosto was postponed until the first day of February, and the peace negotiations having fallen through, I expected to bask in warm sunlight on the shores of the Sea of Marmora, and after two months of cold and snow should have cried "Thalassa, Thalassa," with all the ardour of Xenophon's soldiers, when the delightful blue horizon line should have met my eye. But during the forenoon of January 31st there were vague rumours that the preliminaries of peace were to be signed that afternoon, and all the diplomats keeping a discreet silence on the subject, nothing further was made public until about dark in the evening a mass was celebrated in the Konak, where the Grand Duke has his headquarters, and the bands played, and a tide wave of joyous cheering spread all over the city. To say that everybody, from commanders to cooks, was heartily delighted by this proof that peace was imminent, is to give the faintest possible idea of the general joy that prevailed. It was a most welcome surprise, and a complete surprise, for the Pachas had sent a messenger to Constantinople, asking for

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new instructions, more than a week before, and no answer had been received.

The Grand Duke insisted that they should give their final decision about the propositions for a basis of peace on the 31st, and on the very morning of the day the same aide-de-camp of Suleiman Pacha who came to General Gourko at Ichtiman with the news of an armistice, Zeki Bey, appeared, bringing a message from the Sublime Porte asking why the movements had not ceased, and declaring that the document consenting to the conditions had been sent a week before. The interruption of the communications was the reason why the message had not reached headquarters before this, a delay which changed materially the aspect of the affairs in general, and gave opportunity for the occupation of considerable territory.

However, the basis of peace was signed without further hesitation, painful as it was for the Pachas to put their names to a demand which meant to them the death of Turkey. The scene was extremely touching when the venerable Namyk Pacha could not refrain from shedding tears at the thought of the future of the country he loved so much, and had served so well. On the evening of the 6th the Pachas, who had received a telegram from Constantinople informing them that their mission was a special one, and was now finished, took the train for that city, and no news has since been received from them.

The Russian grey uniform does not lend itself easily to the picturesque, and in Oriental surroundings, side by side with the richly-coloured Turkish costumes, cannot be said to harmonize with the spirit of the scene. Adrianople has probably never had in her entire history such crowded streets. The main thoroughfare is almost impassable at times. Hundreds of soldiers buying shirts, officers chaffering for relics and souvenirs, and crowds of Bulgarians from the neighbouring villages watching for bargains, make up a busy crowd, in which a wonderful trade in all small articles is carried on by scores of enterprising natives. The hotels and restaurants are all crowded to overflowing, every empty house has been filled with soldiers, and officers have been billeted about pro-

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miscuously. Notwithstanding the thousands of soldiers in the streets, the native element predominates so strongly everywhere as to give a characteristic tone to the scenes of unique picturesqueness and exceptional interest that one sees at every turn. Such gorgeous masses of blazing hues are food and drink after the bleak and barren landscapes of the Balkans in their winter dress, and the eyes feed on the rich tones with eagerness and satisfaction, after long abstinence from any luxury of colour.

It seemed strange enough at first to see Turkish soldiers—the Consular guard—with arms in hand, circulating freely among the Russians, but it has long since got to be such a common sight as to cease to attract attention. Day by day scores of Turkish stragglers come in, ragged and dirty, but easily recognizable as soldiers, and now hundreds of them are met in the streets. Unarmed, they found it dangerous to stay in the villages where they had taken refuge, and so they have come into Adrianople. Such is indeed their story. What language the Russian and Turkish soldiers use in conversation is known only to them, for it is quite unintelligible to any one else; but they manage to hold lively chats on amusing subjects, and fraternize in a very jolly manner. The Russian soldier is, first of all, a good-natured fellow, and he looks upon Turks and Frenchmen as a kind of comical animals. Why this is so, no one can say; and especially it is hard to see why the Frenchmen should be particularly amusing to him, but anything that is French he considers funny; and the Turks, their manners, dress, and faces, all excite his mirth. The Englishman and German he cannot endure—possibly because they appear too serious to him, and he has an unmistakable, ingrained dislike for both those nations. Of course, I speak only of the men in the ranks, as one meets them everywhere, and overhears their conversation. Now they are, of course, in high spirits, because they have made themselves very little at home in Bulgaria, and are glad to return to their steppes again. From my own observation, I am convinced that they fraternize with the Turks much more than with the Bulgarians.

In the great bazaar the mixture of races is curious enough

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every variety of type of man, from the coal-black Nubian to the mild-eyed blonde Russian, shoulder one another good-naturedly there. Cossacks handle the rich draperies and haggle about the price of calico shirts; the infantrymen, for the first time in their lives let loose in such a museum of wonderful things, walk about at first quite dazed, and then join in the lively shirt trade with the rest; while the officers, everywhere on the look-out for relics and interesting souvenirs, pay out their shining pol-imperials with a recklessness that has spoiled the market for any other purchasers. Almost every one buys a Turkish woman's costume, most indulge in a specimen or two of Oriental rugs, and for whatever leaves the shelves of the Spanish Jews a good round sum is paid. As for the simplest and most uninteresting relics of the war like ordinary pistols and muskets, they bring full market prices. A Winchester repeating rifle easily commands seven napoleons. These bright new gold pieces will open almost any door; even the mosque of Sultan Selim has been illuminated and a service conducted to satisfy the curiosity of the officers.

I thought it was rather an undignified proceeding on the part of the Turks to go through their service of chanting and prayer with an audience of a thousand Muscovites, and many of the officers present shared my opinion. The mosques have not been in any way desecrated, unless the entrance of thousands of unbelievers may be called desecration. Whatever orders the sentries at the door of Sultan Selim may have received they certainly execute their duty most capriciously. A few Turks coming in at the door the other day, and observing several Russian officers walking about with their boots on, did not stop to take off their shoes, as the custom is, whereupon the sentry followed them into the church, ordered them back, and obliged them to take off the muddy foot-gear. They looked at the soldier as if to say—"I wonder if this fellow is going to oblige us to pray too," and half pleased, half angry, they obeyed the guard and went to their worship.

Around the mosque in the great enclosure gather hundreds of refugees, who bivouac there while on their way through the

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city to their villages. Together with the soldiers they flock to the fountains to bring water, and never so much as a harsh word have I heard pass between the Turks and the Russians. On the contrary, the soldiers very often assist the refugees in various ways. Rarely is a hand held out for charity that does not receive some coin, and I have seen the soldiers bring water quite gallantly for the Turkish women. However trifling these acts may seem as indications of the spirit of the soldier, they are to me additional proof that the Russians will go home almost to a man with an exaggerated idea of the depravity of the Bulgarian and a correspondingly elevated opinion of the good qualities of the Turks.

In my letter from Sofia I spoke of the English doctors whom I found at Strigli in company with Colonel Charles Baker, and Mr. Bell, of the *Illustrated London News*. I was confident at the time that every one of these men would receive the best of treatment from the Russians; first, from what I knew had been done in similar cases, and then because I heard General Gourko say that the doctors and the correspondent were not prisoners of war in any sense, and he gave orders that they should be given liberty of action. It was with no little surprise that I met part of that company here in Adrianople lately, Drs. Armand Leslie, Kirkpatrick, and Nevill, and Mr. Bell. They came in here by train on the 3rd inst. from Hermanli, whither they had been marched from Strigli *viâ* Plevna, Loftcha, Selvi, Gabrova, and Kezanlik, a journey of three weeks in severe weather, twice crossing the Balkans on foot, always treated as common prisoners of war. Captain Baranoffsky, who had charge of them at Strigli, gave them into the hands of a corporal's guard, and they were marched away to the headquarters, which were supposed to be at Bogot. Every night they were shut up in a miserable prison, every day they marched on the road, not being allowed to mount their horses. For the first two weeks something like two roubles apiece were given them to live on, and as they had little money of their own, and could not have found food to buy if they had had plenty of gold, they were obliged to put up with bread and water.

The details of the tedious march will doubtless be made public

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by one of the actors in the drama. That it was most inexcusable and disgraceful treatment of English subjects who, according to all laws of war, were not prisoners, there is not a question. The first officer on the road who showed them any consideration was the commandant at Kezanlik. I am very sorry that I have not his name. He gave them two napoleons apiece, I believe, and in other ways showed his appreciation of their position.

Arrived here, they were immediately, on the representation of Mr. Blunt, set at liberty and went to Constantinople by the first train. The Grand Duke not only ordered General Stein, the commandant at Adrianople, to express the regrets of the Commander-in-Chief that there had been such a misunderstanding, but to further prove his sincerity has ordered a strict investigation of the conduct of Captain Baranoffsky. As the Englishmen are gone, and have only left copies of their diaries with Mr. Blunt, to be sent in with their formal complaint, there is very little likelihood that the investigation will result in anything. The importance of the questions under present consideration naturally swamp the complaints of private individuals who have had the misfortune to suffer for the vicious ignorance of a single Russian officer.

The fortifications of Adrianople are well worth the study of any military engineer, and the Russians may here take a very good lesson in the art. The forts are very large, and all constructed on the same principle, namely, a high, central "cavalry," often with two surrounding lines of parapets successively lower, so that there are actually three lines of artillery, one above the other. The infantry fire is similarly arranged. The Russian system is to bury the guns in the earth; the Turkish, to raise them high in the air; and the experience of this war has proved the superiority of the latter system. Like all the Turkish earthworks, the forts at Adrianople are models of good construction. The great central traverses which serve as bombproofs are here largely built of stone and mortar, with, of course, an impenetrable covering of soft earth, and there is very neat masonry about the gates and the doors of the magazines. It is a curious fact that one of the largest forts stands close beside the now

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deserted, half-ruined house built and occupied by the Russian Field-Marshal Diebitch, after his campaign in 1829.

: : CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 6th.*—To-day it is generally believed that we are cut off from telegraphic communication with Europe except by way of Bombay. For upwards of a week it has been impossible to send a telegraphic message except by way of Alexandria. That route has the two disadvantages of being very dear and very doubtful. When correspondents have not only to pay three francs fifteen centimes a word, but are gravely informed that as the line through Beyrout and Palestine is very seldom used it is probably out of order, sending messages is an unsatisfactory task.

Bad, however, as telegraphic communication by Alexandria has been during the last week, it will be very considerably better than communication by Bombay. For three days we have received no telegrams from Europe, and our anxiety for news may easily be imagined. The Eastern Question for people in England is no doubt of great interest, but for the people of Constantinople is one of vital interest. We know that an armistice has been signed, and that certain preliminaries of peace have been agreed to. But we do not know whether the armistice is for any fixed period, or whether it may not be put an end to at any hour. We know that Greece has advanced her troops to the frontier, and that the semi-official Turkish paper, the *Vakit*, says that an ultimatum has been sent to Greece, ordering the withdrawal of these troops within the next two days, or else Turkey will declare war. We know, too, that the Russian troops have been gradually narrowing the semi-circle around us, and have occupied Tchataldja within gunshot of the outworks for the defence of Constantinople. The Turks believe, and it is commonly asserted, though I do not know if there is trustworthy authority for it, that the Russians have continued their advance notwithstanding the armistice. Probably it will turn out that towards the town last named, and in other directions, the Russians continued to advance until news arrived of the signature. I know of no case where the Russians have

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advanced after the time when the fact of the signature had become known. Rodosto, on the Marmora, is the only place where the Russians have reached the sea southwards.

The master of an English tug which arrived here yesterday from that port states that Prince Oldenburg with eight hundred Uhlans arrived there on Saturday last. The account which he gives is reassuring. When the Prince heard that an English steamer was in the harbour he sent for the master and treated him with great courtesy. The master says that the town is perfectly quiet. The Turkish zaptiehs were ordered by the Prince to act as police, each man wearing a white badge upon his arm to show that he is a Turkish soldier employed in the police service. The Russian soldiers were on the best of terms with the people, and paid for whatever they took.

The action of Greece is what is puzzling us all. The Greek Minister here, M. Condouriotti, either believes or professes to believe that there is no real difficulty with Greece, and there are men of position bold enough to declare that the movement of the Greek troops across the frontier does not actually mean war, but is only a preconcerted movement to satisfy the Greek people and to induce Europe to take care of Greek interests at the approaching Congress. Of course you in England will learn from Athens the truth about this matter before we do. For my part, I cannot believe in the insincerity of the action which Greece has taken. A most unfortunate jealousy of the Bulgarians has made the Greeks of Turkey unwilling to throw in their lot with the Sclavs, and this jealousy, combined with the well-grounded fear of the serious consequences which would result to Greece were she to declare war against Turkey, has much more probably been the reason why she has done nothing until now than any understanding with Turkey.

It does not require any far-fetched reason to account for the inactivity of Greece. The greater portion of her wealth is at sea. It sounds absurd, but it is true that the number of ships belonging to Greece is greater than that of any other State excepting England. Of course, in tonnage half a dozen European nations would take precedence; but one has

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only to pass a few days in the Archipelago to see Greek vessels by the hundreds, and to see that in case of war they would be rapidly swept up by a Power like Turkey, possessing a tolerably effective fleet. Moreover, many of the towns of Greece—like Syra, for example—lie at the mercy of a barbarous foe, and the Ministers who have to decide the question of war or peace for Greece cannot enter upon war with a light heart. To Greece war must inevitably mean very great loss and suffering; and if the Greeks declare war, their sympathy for their Greek brethren in enslaved Greece must be very deep. If it be true that Greece is on the point of declaring war, our position here would become much more isolated than it has yet been, as there will be danger of our mail service being interfered with. In Stamboul and its neighbourhood there are upwards of forty thousand Greek subjects, and it may become very difficult to avoid a collision between them and the Circassians and Turks now in the capital.

While the action of Greece is one of the unknown quantities in the problem which we have to solve, there is another which arises from the supposed conjoint action of England and Austria. During the last three days this has indeed been the principal topic of conjecture. The numerous interviews between Mr. Layard and Count Zichy are carefully noted; but though the notion of an understanding between these two Powers is evidently cherished at the English Embassy, I am in a position to affirm positively that the Austrian Ambassador denies that there has been, here at least, any joint action whatever. Among the Turks the idea of an interference at this stage is, I believe, rather disliked than otherwise. The Turk recognizes that they have been badly beaten, and wish to make an end of the whole matter. In the absence, therefore, of information from Europe, I am still of opinion that if Lord Beaconsfield has determined to run England into war, he cannot count Austria as his ally. The Turk recognizes that the best thing they have to hope for is that they may be allowed to sign final conditions of peace without delay, and get rid of the danger which at the present moment is threatening Constantinople itself.

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I telegraphed two days ago, by way of Alexandria, that the office of Grand Vizier was abolished, and that Achmet Vevyk Pacha had been named Grand Vizier only that the office might be done away with. He is now named Prime Minister. It is fair, I think, to assume that the idea of the change is that a Premiership is more in accordance with the practice of constitutional government than the Grand Vizierate. Midhat's Constitution, however, recognizes the position of a Grand Vizier. Still, the arbitrary act of the Sultan in abolishing, by an Imperial Hatt, the position recognized in the Constitution may be considered as an attempt still further to place the country under constitutional government.

The selection of Achmet Vevyk as the First Minister has taken every one by surprise. It is well known that he failed to obtain a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, and the failure was attributed to the direct interference of the Government. His promotion to his present high post is thought to be due to Mr. Layard, whose friend Achmet Vevyk has been for many years. It will be curious to see what sort of a First Minister he will make. I have recently described him as the most learned Turk living. He is generally reputed to be of Greek origin, and his vivacity and intelligence confirm this conjecture. In a country where the taking of bribes, the want of patriotism, and a habit of sacrificing national to personal considerations is the rule, it is to the credit of Achmet Vevyk that he has remained a comparatively poor man, and that he is singled out from the ring of Pachas as an honest man. His abilities, too, are undoubtedly great. It remains to be seen whether he will make a good Prime Minister. Hitherto he has not been successful as an administrator, and his failure is put down to inability to work harmoniously with his colleagues, and to a general crotchetiness. The most important office which he has held up to the present time is that of Ambassador to Napoleon III. Perhaps he may succeed better among his own people. If he fail it will certainly not be owing to want of patriotism or of belief in the capacity of the Turkish race.

The stream of fugitives into Constantinople still continues to

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flow, though with diminished force. Every effort which can be made to lessen the amount of distress which prevails among these fugitives is hardly adequate to contend with it. The fact that the Turks themselves are seriously alarmed at the numbers of armed Circassians, Zeibecks, and Pomacks, who are lounging lazily about the streets, may constitute the safety of the capital. There exists a great anxiety to ship these warlike-looking scoundrels off to Syra, to Anatolia, anywhere out of Constantinople. "These are the cause," said the member for Smyrna a day or two ago, "of all our woes," and the remark was agreed in by nearly all the members present, and, without looking for the *causa causans*, may be accepted as true.

The streets of Constantinople at the present time present an appearance such as they can hardly have presented for many years. The long wooden bridge which crosses the Golden Horn is crowded with refugees and other passengers. Take away a dozen or two Europeans, and there is hardly a man whose costume would not create a sensation in the streets of an English town. The first group which is sure to catch the eye is an ordinary sight here. The place is evidently a favourite one for cripples, and a traveller will do his best to get out of the way of the broken and twisted arms and legs which are pushed ostentatiously under his notice in all their hideous deformity. Evidently these cripples are having a rich harvest from the crowds of refugees to whom they are showing their wounds. One wretched boy, who sways all day long backwards and forwards howling the praises of Mahomet, has had a large crowd around him every time I have passed him during the last fortnight. But the crowd is, to a stranger, far more interesting than the object of the crowd's gaze. There are Pomacks, the mountaineer Bulgarians, who became Moslems to save their lands, and who could tell some wonderful stories about the murders in Bulgaria. Some of their women were regretting last week to a friend of mine, who was supplying them with house room, that they had to buy vegetables in Constantinople. At home, said they, we always got everything of that kind from our Bulgarian neighbours without payment. Handsome-looking fellows many of

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these Pomacks are—tall, well-knit, and with a picturesque dress, consisting of a loose jacket, always more or less embroidered, turbans about their scarlet fezes, and very loose knickerbockers. Give them a pistol or two, and a sword or dagger in their belts, and they are complete.

Side by side with them, along the whole length of the bridge, are Circassians, usually in long coats made of grey home-spun, with Astrakan caps, a row of cartridges, across the chest, pistols, and probably a yataghan. There is not a man among them who is not armed. The Circassian has a perfect mania for possessing firearms. A good deal of the money taken from the Greeks and Bulgarians by many of the handsomely-made scoundrels about us has already passed into the possession of the Stamboul dealers in revolvers. Passing over the bridge, we shall see to a certainty a crowd round every shop where firearms are exposed for sale.

The only men who appear to carry more arms than the Circassians in this motley crowd are the Zeibecks. These men have a waistband wound around so often that it is very often eight or nine inches distant from their waists. This is almost always crowded with weapons, the most conspicuous being a knife about two feet six inches long. It is the extensive character of their armoury and their wonderful caps, which look like six or seven fezes stuck one on the top of the other, which distinguish the Zeibecks from the Pomacks. In point of civilization, or, to speak more accurately, of savageness, there is probably little to choose between the Asia Minor Zeibeck and the Bulgarian Pomack. So crowded has this bridge been during these late days that it has been difficult to get over it in a carriage. Once at the Stamboul end, we see additional evidence that the great crowds in the street are refugees. On one side are numbers of country horses for sale, probably three-fourths of them stolen. They are going now at about one-tenth of their ordinary prices. The owners have no use for them, and perhaps no money wherewith to buy food for them. On the other side men in almost every variety of costume except European are staring at the stalls, where cheap European articles are being sold. Kurds and Albanians, Arabs and Bulgarians, Syrians and Tartars, are

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jostling each other together with Circassians, Pomacks, Greeks, Armenians, and Turks.

Any one who knows Constantinople at ordinary times cannot but be struck with the contrast between the Turk of the provinces and his co-religionist of the capital. It has long been a favourite theory with certain writers who wish to see everything Turkish in the most favourable light that the provincial Turk is much more honest and much less vicious than the Stamboulee. This, for example, is the conclusion which it seems to me Mr. Palgrave has come to. Hardly any epithet is too bad to apply to the Stamboulee. Mr. Palgrave absolutely refuses to undertake his defence, and paints him as black as any hater of Turkish misrule could desire. But in the interior of Asia Minor he believes himself to have found traces of the old-fashioned Turk, whose word is as good as an Englishman's bond. Other writers have taken Mr. Palgrave's theory much farther, and boldly assert, as two or three of your contemporaries have done during the last few months, that while the Stamboulee, meaning by that word the representative official Turk living in the capital, is about as bad as it would be possible to make him, it is because he has been brought into connection with Western civilization, Western roguery, corruption, and infidelity; and that the provincial Turk retains the original virtue of the race uncontaminated by the injurious influence of Christian civilization. Travellers who come to Constantinople, and find easily enough what is the condition of things here, may well console themselves with the hope that things are not so bad in the country. The country, however, they very rarely visit.

I venture to say that an hour's walk through the streets of the capital just now would help to dispel any such illusion. Here about us are provincial Turks by the hundred. They are in every variety of dress, from the simple sheepskin with the wool worn inside to that of the village imaums in the flowing robes of the old-fashioned Turk. Most of them seem to be absolute strangers to water, and as they go lazily sauntering along, staring at all the novel scenes about them, one does not wonder that a great fear has sprung up among the

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Stamboul Turks, not only of the Circassians, but of their own countrymen.

Any one who believed the reports of those who have perhaps only spent a few days or weeks in Constantinople, that the provincial Turk was more trustworthy, because he had been brought less into contact with Europeans and retained more of his primitive simplicity, would I fancy soon begin to doubt the truth of his belief. His observations would soon show him what is of course the truth in Turkey, as it is in every other country of the world, that the inhabitants of the towns are more civilized, more polite, and less barbarian, boorish, and less uncouth than those of the country. As the bigotry and superstition of the French peasant is greater than that of the dweller in Paris, so the fanaticism and conservatism of all the Moslem ideas which have made a just regard to the rights of their Christian neighbours impossible is greater among the provincial Turks than among the dwellers in Constantinople. The latter at least see something of the lives of civilized men, cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the Christians are at least their equals, and in many respects superiors, and their minds are educated thereby. The lesson which etymology teaches of the difference between the condition of dwellers in cities and dwellers in the country is certainly not belied in Turkey.

Amid the crowds in the streets are numbers of groups of Gipsies. In this country these wanderers conform to a certain extent to Mohammedanism. Their women wear the yashmak. During the attacks made upon the Bulgarians they were often guilty of some of the worst excesses, and probably it is the knowledge of this fact that has driven so many of them to take refuge in the capital. Passing along, we see them crowding into every hollow which can give protection from the weather. Here it is an old cellar, the superstructure of which has been burnt, which they have occupied. Their tents are pitched wherever there is a plot of spare ground.

At one of the mosques, formerly a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, a family has made use as a shelter of the ancient font, long since turned out of the building, and placed on its side in the mosque yard. A little further on,

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crowds of refugees are sheltering themselves in and around St. Sofia. Great trains of arabas are coming along a street in another direction from the Adrianople road. These are almost invariably drawn by bullocks or buffaloes. The whole conveyance is one which is significant of the advancement of agriculture, and of the government of the country. When Mahmoud entered the city four centuries ago, the carts could not have been of a more primitive construction, nor the animals of a worse breed. A simple box of the roughest possible description, put upon wheels, without a spring, and drawn by bullocks of wolf-like colour, is all that any of the country Turks can show. There is not a carriage, a spring cart, or anything more advanced than this araba in the whole melancholy line that is coming in. If there were, it would not be able to travel many hours over the roads leading towards Adrianople. The shivering wretches who are in these arabas have generally a covering made of open matting, which affords very little protection against wind and rain. An ordinary carrier's cart, such as every village in England could have produced at any time during the last forty years, would be a travelling palace in comparison with anything which the thousands now coming in can produce. The poverty-stricken condition of the Turkish peasant, and the little advance he has made in civilization, is a fair comment on what I have heard spoken of as the Turk's "genius for government."

I have never seen the Turks work so energetically as they have done during the last two or three weeks in endeavouring to feed, to find room for, and to introduce order among, the refugees. They are assisted in this work by various societies. Several of the largest khans in Stamboul are filled with the refugees. The service in many of the mosques is no longer performed, because the building is filled with them. In some of the churches Christians have Moslems among them. All the villages along the Bosphorus have received their share. The Civic Guard is employed in distributing bread. In doing their work they are often not very particular about their means. The cabs are seized and are made to convey refugees, or sick and wounded soldiers, or provisions, from one place

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to the other, and every now and then a number of Armenian or other hamals are swept up, and set to do a few hours' work, of course, without the chance of being paid.

Many of the refugees have brought with them all the property they possess. The wardrobe of a Turkish peasant family, however, is seldom very large. Furniture he has none, unless a few simple cooking utensils and a prayer carpet or two are to be so considered. The Circassians and Gipsies, however, have brought in a large mass of plunder. One case has been taken up by the Patriarch of a girl of seventeen, who states that the Circassian claiming her murdered her parents. The cattle of the country can be bought for a pound each. A secretary of an embassy bought a few days ago in the streets a horse, with saddle and bridle, for about six shillings. A Bishop's robe was exposed for sale on Sunday last in the Grand Rue of Pera, for a Turkish pound. It had, probably, cost at least fifteen. Some of the local Greek churches have purchased silver ornaments and furniture intended for church use at very cheap rates. A collector of old swords, sabres, and arms of every kind, might make a small fortune if he could go among the people who have come in during the last few days and make his selection.

There is, no doubt, a very considerable amount of distress among the refugees, and for some time to come they will require a large amount of aid. By far the larger number of them have no money, and are incapable of earning any in the capital. But to look at the men and women one sees in the streets one would hardly imagine the distress to be very great. To many of the men the march into Constantinople seems to be a sort of pic-nic. The wonders even of this capital are as great as those of London were to a Northumbrian or Cornishman a century ago. It is in the faces of the women and children that one sees signs of suffering. The little pinched faces which peep out from bundles of rags in the arabas as they pass, and the careworn or haggard faces of the women, who seem to have lost all interest in everything, even in their own children, tell of days and nights in the cold, and perhaps snow, and of insufficient

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food. For their sakes, at least, it is to be hoped that the armistice will soon be followed by definite terms of peace, by the retreat of the victorious armies, and by permission to return to their homes.

Meantime the great question for the residents in the capital is, will terms of peace be speedily agreed upon, or are we still destined to stand a siege? If the latter is to be our fate, we have some very disagreeable companions, and we can only hope that the end will not be long.

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 13th.*—The discussions in the Turkish Chamber of Deputies with regard to the massacres of Greeks in Viza and its neighbourhood have been of the warmest character. Petraki Effendi, the representative of Rustchuk, has taken the most active part. The only denial which has been given to the facts stated is by Mustapha Bey, who stated that "The religion of Islam does not permit the perpetration of the acts imputed to the Circassians. Therefore, as Mussulmans, they could not have committed them." Whether they were committed by the Circassians in any other capacity than as Mussulmans Mustapha does not say. It is fair to add that the great majority of the members of the Chamber, Christians and Moslems alike, joined in the demand for a strict investigation, and for the punishment of the offenders. I had prepared a summary of the facts set out in the debate in the Chamber, but at the last moment have received a statement, evidently compiled from official sources, and embodying the report to the Greek Patriarch, which sets out the circumstances more fully than the report of what was said in the Chamber does. This will give a notion of the renewal upon the Greek population of Eastern Roumelia of what aroused the indignation of Europe when committed in South-Western Bulgaria.

The following is the account forwarded by my correspondents:—

"I might, perhaps, give a more faithful description of the terrible scenes which occurred at Viza—scenes, in contemplating which one feels his hair standing on end, and at which Satan and Hell must certainly have been filled with envy,

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were I to hold in my hand, instead of a pen, a lighted torch and trace letters of fire, such as would resound to the utmost ends of the earth on layers of gunpowder. On the 22nd of January the Commander-in-Chief, Mehemet Ali Pacha, coming from the localities north of Adrianople, passed through Viza at the head of an army of 32,000, and stayed one night in the town. The inhabitants spared no pains or money in providing for the comfort of the General and his army.

"Before taking his departure on the following day the Pacha gave orders to the civil governor of the town to remain constantly there, protecting the life, honour, and property of the population, and not to leave the place unless such circumstances should arise as would render it impossible for him to stay. The inhabitants, labouring under great agitation, owing to certain rumours which had reached them of attacks and raids committed elsewhere by Circassians, warmly begged of the Pacha to leave in the town a small detachment of his forces to guard the country, and, in case of need, be there to repulse any possible attacks on the part of marauders. The Pacha, however, refused this request, on the ground that any such detachment left behind might ultimately have its line of retreat cut off, adding that there were other detachments coming after him which had orders to halt wherever their presence might be required, and to which he requested the inhabitants to show the same courtesy that they had shown to himself and his army, and prepare the provisions they would necessarily require. The same things were repeated to them by the officers who passed through on the following day. The inhabitants, exclusively Greeks, immediately set to work and prepared such a quantity of bread and provisions as would have sufficed for the requirements of double the number of the forces expected, and having got everything for their reception ready, waited for their coming, like hospitable innkeepers, at the very doors of their houses.

"In the midst of the refugees following in the wake of Mehmet Ali Pacha, and who since the day before had been constantly passing through the town, there suddenly appeared, coming towards Viza, a large body of armed men

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consisting entirely of Bashi-Bazouks, Zeibecks, and Circassians. Not the slightest suspicion of them entered into the minds of the population. On the contrary, some of the townspeople, in obedience to the orders received from the Commander-in-chief, and confiding in the assurances given by him and his officers, went fearlessly forward to meet the new-comers, and offer the provisions they had prepared. It is at this point that the curtain is drawn up, and a sight presented to the world so ghastly that the understanding fails to comprehend it, and before which imagination itself becomes distracted with horror and wonder. No sooner were they in the town than these savage hordes of marauders, without a single word of explanation or warning, fell like hungry wolves upon the unprepared and peaceful inhabitants, seized almost all of them, and, after plundering them of what they happened to have about their persons, obliged them, by pointing their guns at their heads, to say whether and where they had any money hidden. There is no torture which they did not invent in order to extract from the mouths of their victims such a confession. Massacres, murders, tortures, mutilations, rapine, pillage, fire; such was their infernal programme. Priests were seized, insulted, and ultimately tied on piles of wood and burnt alive. Many a parent would have preferred, were the option left to him, to put his own eyes out, like Œdipus, rather than see his daughters, innocent young girls, sacrificed before his very sight, at the altar of dishonour, and trodden under the heels of shame, he being expressly made to stand by and witness, with tied hands and feet, the dreadful sight, God only knows with what unspeakable agony. . . . The daughters of the greater number of families, as also many married women, upon whom the savages had satiated their most brutal passions, have been carried off, and nothing has been ascertained as yet as to their fate.

"Until late at night the firing of musketry continued with unabated fury, and the number of corpses lying about in the streets and within the houses increased every moment. In the meantime the pillage of houses and shops went on most savagely. The plunder was being continually brought out

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and laden on carts and horses, and so bent did the savage marauders seem to be upon destruction that the goods that the carts would no longer hold, being already overladen, they threw under the wheels, and, passing the carts over them, broke them to pieces. The roofs of houses were pierced through or pulled down that nothing that might by chance be hidden there should escape their greedy grasp. Thus many people who, in the hope of escaping the general massacre, had fled to the tops of their houses, met there with their deaths after being submitted to the most horrible tortures. Corn, barley, Indian corn, and other cereals were scattered about in immense quantities in the streets. The holy vessels of the Greek Church were taken out and put up to a mock auction, while the sacred edifice itself was profaned by being turned into a stable in which these monsters tied up their horses. The cathedral church and buildings, after having been pillaged, were set fire to and burnt. Owing to the frenzy with which they broke into the cathedral and the Bishop's palace, we had come to think that they must have also laid murderous hands upon our respected pastor, and that, in addition to the numberless other victims, we should also have to mourn for the loss of one of the most virtuous and distinguished Metropolitans of the orthodox Church. Fortunately, however, his Eminence happened at the time to be staying at Medea, one of the three cathedral towns of the see of Viza, and was thus, by the will, undoubtedly, of Divine Providence, saved from that hurricane of murder and pillage.

"The scenes that were being enacted in the streets and houses are beyond description. The atrocities committed here are, I am afraid, without a parallel. Respectable and peaceful citizens, women, children, none were spared, but either put to death by torture, shot, or mutilated. The hands of a sick and dying person, who was being carried to a Mussulman house by a Turk, were cut off, and the porter had his skull broken. After the bands of Zeibecks, Bashi-Bazouks, and Circassians, came the Gipsies, seizing upon everything that the others did not consider worth carrying off, and completing the work of plunder and devastation. Even the very mats

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of the houses were carried away. On the following day, from early dawn until night set in, musketry fire was continually heard, from which it appeared that the savages must have returned to Viza for the purpose of completing the work of the preceding day. They plundered again the houses and shops, seized upon everything that could be carried away, mercilessly put to death all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, that they could lay their hands upon, and finally ended by setting fire to the town, which soon became a whirlpool of flames and smoke, while they rushed towards the mountains, whither a few of the inhabitants had managed to escape, and whom they now sought out, their thirst for blood not being yet satiated. About one half of the population of Viza, consisting entirely of Greeks, some at the point of death, others already dead, are lying about in the streets and houses unburied and rotting, while those who managed to effect their escape to the mountains are still wandering there, in the very heart of winter, almost naked, with bare feet, without a roof over their heads, without food of any kind, trembling with cold, hunger, and fear. The father, the mother, the children of one and the same family, no longer recognizing one another, are, in a sepulchral voice, and with bloodshot eyes, asking each other whether they know what has become of their fathers, their husbands, their mothers, their children; if any one has seen or heard of them; whether they are alive or dead.

"From Viza the wild bands betook themselves to the villages of St. George, St. John, Pinaca, Tchakli, Karaki, Serai, Yorali, Mukriatissa, Asranyo, Toprika, Ahmet Bey, Messina, Tsfikoi, and Tchogara. New atrocities, new scenes of pillage, rapine, murder, and devastation, occurred at each of these places. The same terrible fate seems to have befallen not only the villages belonging to the 'caza,' or circumference of Viza, numbering a population of some 12,000 souls, exclusively Greeks, but also those belonging to the 'cazas' of Medea, Pyrgos, and other 'cazas' appertaining to the 'sandjak' of Rodosto; and furthermore, according to information received thence, those belonging to the 'sandjak' of Adrianople. About these, however, I can give no details, as the telegraphic

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communication has been lately interrupted on all sides, and not one of the affrighted inhabitants durst come out of the lair into which he has crawled seeking refuge.

"About the following, however, most horrible, abominable, and unheard-of crime, in itself a Colossus of savageness, a whole abyss of atrocity, I have most authentic and reliable information, though, for the sake of humanity, I should have been glad were it otherwise. It appears that the inhabitants of the village of St. George, 800 souls in all, Greeks entirely, flying before the Circassians, who had attacked and destroyed their village, managed to hide themselves in a large cave near Kara Déré. The Circassians, ever thirsting for Christian blood, were scouring the country in search of victims, and finally fell upon and discovered the place of refuge of these unfortunate people, and immediately tried to effect an entrance into the cave. In this, however, they were baffled, the entrance to the cave being well guarded and bravely defended by the refugees. This show of resistance on the part of the people, and the fact, perhaps, that three of their number were mortally wounded by the shots fired from within, seemed to exasperate them the more, and, after two or three further attempts to effect an entrance but without success, they determined by any possible means to put immediately to death those within. They accordingly set to their infernal work, and by means of crowbars they ultimately succeeded in opening a hole on the roof of the cave, through which without loss of time they proceeded to pour a large quantity of brimstone and asphalte, to which they set fire by firing their guns through the hole. As a consequence, the inside of the cave was in a few minutes filled with smoke so dense that the poor people dropped down one by one, dying of suffocation . . . and the souls of 800 martyrs fled almost simultaneously towards the foot of the throne of their Creator, the Almighty. Out of the 800 who entered the cave only eighteen were saved, almost by a miracle, having on first entering the cave taken their stand at the furthest end of it, and having, after the Circassians had taken themselves off, exulting no doubt in their abominable work, come out of that immense grave by dragging them-

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selves over the dead bodies of their fellow villagers of yesterday.

"We here at Medea experienced a close blockade. Thrice did the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks attempt to enter the town; but each time they were most effectually repulsed, thanks to the measures taken and the courage displayed by the population, which, like those of all the surrounding districts, is entirely composed of Greeks. We hardly, however, consider ourselves safe as yet. The sword of the Circassians seems to be hanging over our heads like that of Damocles. We greet to-day's sun in doubt whether we shall live to see that of the morrow. We are, so to speak, wavering between life and death.

"I was on the point of closing this letter when I heard of the arrival in the town of one of the most respectable inhabitants of Viza, a Greek, who had managed to effect his escape to the mountains. I went to see him, and found him barefooted, almost naked, bloodstained, and trembling with cold and hunger. He gives a full confirmation of the reports which reached us here with regard to the dreadful occurrences there. He came on here to report the same by telegraph, but he found the wires cut.

"Such atrocious crimes are committed, at only a few hours' distance from the captial of the Ottoman Empire, and that towards the end of the nineteenth century, which really in cruel mockery only must have been denominated the century of light and civilization. Let civilization now come forward, pull up its sleeves, dip its hands up to the elbows in blood, and exult over the sight of rotting corpses and broken skulls."

From another account I extract the following particulars:—

"Of those who had fled to the mountains, the husbands were in utter ignorance as to the fate of their wives, the wives as to that of their husbands, the fathers had lost their children, mothers their daughters. Large numbers of young girls were carried off by the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, countless women were dishonoured and afterwards tortured to death, while parents, seeking in agony for their children, were seized, despoiled of all their property, and shot in cold

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blood. It becomes impossible to describe at length the atrocious deeds committed, the murders, the pillage, the rapes, the massacres, the mutilations, or to fix the number of young girls that were carried off. No less than 6,000 carts were laden with plunder and young girls; 300 of the population of Viza are lying about in the streets of the town dead and mutilated, presenting a most ghastly aspect; 800 souls who had taken refuge in a cave were burnt alive by the Circassians. The number of the massacred at Viza has not been as yet exactly ascertained.

"The wild marauders, after satiating their thirst for blood and pillage, set fire to the villages devastated, and betook themselves to other such scenes of action. Only Medea, of all the towns of the province in which these fearful occurrences are taking place, has up to the present moment escaped the general devastation, having been strongly fortified and watchfully guarded day and night by the inhabitants. It has already been thrice attacked by Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks; but, though hitherto these attacks have been successfully repulsed, we are still in the greatest anxiety with regard to our ultimate fate. There are no governors now either at Viza or in Medea, having both left, that of the former town ten, and that of the latter four, days ago.

"P.S. The massacres and pillage still continue; the Christians who had fled to the mountains are being pursued and mercilessly put to death; the dead remain unburied. If no immediate measures are taken for coming to the relief of those who have fled to the mountains they will before long succumb to hunger and cold."

The letter below describes the incident of the entry of the British Fleet into the Dardanelles, and its return to Besika:—

:: SYRA, *February 15th.*—The circumstances connected with the recent movement of the Fleet are these: the British Ambassador received a telegram on Saturday afternoon from Lord Derby, stating that Admiral Hornby had been ordered to leave Besika with six vessels, and proceed to Constantinople. Until then Mr. Layard knew nothing of the proposal,

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which appears to be due solely to the English Government, without his request or suggestion. It appears to have been presumed that, as the Porte had given the requisite permission to pass the Dardanelles on a previous occasion, this would remain valid, or that no difficulty would be found in obtaining fresh permission. Mr. Layard was requested to obtain the necessary document. The Porte refused, alleging that the circumstances had changed. The preliminary conditions of peace and the armistice had been agreed to. The advance of the Fleet would be construed as hostile to Russia. The allegation as to the protection of the lives and property of British subjects was admitted on all hands to be insufficient, the condition of the capital having improved, and the danger of disturbances having become immensely less since the armistice and the presence of the Russian army in virtual possession of the lines of Constantinople. No one here imagines this can have been the object of the Fleet's attempted visit. The Government, moreover, pointed out that if the Fleet entered with permission, the Russians would probably occupy the city. It is asserted that the Grand Duke Nicholas telegraphed to this effect on Monday, on hearing of the proposal. It appears that Admiral Hornby received his telegram two days before Mr. Layard. Admiral Hornby sent the *Serapis* first to see whether instructions had been received, and anchored to await a communication from Mr. Layard. This was received to the above effect, and he returned to Besika Bay. Great preparations had been made here for the reception of the Fleet, hundreds waiting its arrival. The movement is regarded everywhere as inexplicable, almost ludicrous. Yesterday Pera was placarded with this notice :—"Lost, between Besika Bay and Constantinople, an ironclad fleet. Any one giving information will be handsomely rewarded."

Another correspondent furnishes further details of the state of affairs in Constantinople :—

¶ CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 21st.*—The last rumour this morning says that England and Austria have almost determined to act in concert against Russia, but there is no official grounds

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for the report. It is one of the many wild stories that fly from mouth to mouth almost ceaselessly now; the *on dit* of the evening generally being in flat contradiction of that of the morning. In the meantime the Russians are very busy intriguing at the Porte, and fortifying their positions round the ill-fated city. Now and then two or three may be seen strolling along—already with the air of easy triumph—followed by the curious glances of the Sons of the Prophet, who scarcely thought six weeks ago that they would be thus seeing their streets paraded by a conquering Giaour. The Russian generals are staying at the Hotels Royal and Misseri, and may also be seen dining at the clubs.

The works outside are being very strongly fortified, especially at Tchataldja, where the Russians are massing their troops with the greatest vigour. Riding out to their camp last Saturday, the road presented a pitiable spectacle. Dead horses lay at almost every hundred yards, and here and there some wretched animal, more like a skeleton than a horse, generally badly wounded, dragged itself along. One creature I noticed quietly cropping the grass at the roadside with one leg broken and its entrails brushing the dust. Such animal suffering is bad enough to see, but the refugees, still swarming in, bring us face to face with terrible human misery. It is perhaps a matter of wonder to some why they should leave their homes and their property to travel far and roughly, and then find no rest; but the solution is possibly to be found in the behaviour of the Circassians, who are certainly quite as much accountable for Turkish distress as the Muscovite. These ruffians arrive at a village with exaggerated tales of Russian violence — how the neighbouring village has been first sacked and then burnt after all the inhabitants have been murdered, &c.—a product of their fertile imaginations —and so work on the minds of the villagers that the Kaimakhan generally gives warning, and the result is a total exodus —with the exception of Messieurs les Circassiens, who stay an hour later to plunder the now empty houses, and ride off enriched with the loot acquired by this ruse! One thing they are very careful of, and that is, never, if possible, to be within reach of a Russian halter.

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The effect of a guilty conscience is very apparent in the case of these gentry, and perhaps is often an active agent in the flight of the Pomacks, most of whom are more or less implicated in the first massacres. Of course, when the guilty have fled, the innocent do not care to remain and receive the punishment, which would most likely fall to them, and so they fly, one and all—such a flight as probably has not been seen for years. We were watching them come in last Friday, and surely a more piteous spectacle could not be found. A cold—bitterly cold—day, with the north wind driving down a storm of sleet and snow from the mountains, to add one more sheet to the snow-shroud already lying deep over the face of the country. Toiling along, wearily, listlessly, scarcely caring to trail one foot after another, the wretched fugitives wind along the streets, some—the fortunate—to find shelter in stables, outhouses, or some such cover, some to sink on the way, and some—do not count them the worst off—to sleep softly in the snow outside for the last time.

All the horrors of ancient history are here being re-enacted in the face of our advanced civilization, women killing their children to prevent them from sufferings like their own, fathers stabbing their daughters, husbands their wives, to save them from the Russians and their own Circassians—flight swift and sudden, generally with no change of clothing, and often on foot, through the most rough and perilous country, and then to arrive in their capital like this! Look at the party now passing. First comes an old woman—she cannot be younger than sixty—with her loose pantaloons tucked up to the knee, and a pair of wooden sabots on her stockingless feet; with a staff in one hand and a rope in the other, tied to the horns of two oxen, she tramps wearily through the mud and slush, as perhaps she has done for hours. The oxen, lean and emaciated, can scarcely drag the clumsy, wooden-axled waggon over the uneven road. It is filled with what may strike a first observer as rags—mattresses and two or three chairs. Look closer! The rags hide pinched and haggard faces: a young woman nursing a little baby, sheltering it from the cold at the expense of her

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own bosom, and two little girls; they are jammed between the mattresses and two chairs, and very likely have not changed their cramped position for many hours, as the snow lies thick on the coarse Bulgarian cloth that covers their heads; and these, be assured, are considered the lucky ones. Some must walk, half starving, a week or more, with scarcely a rag to warm them.

Behind the waggon comes an old man, blind, and leaning on the neck of a shaggy little pony, on which are seated a girl and a boy; and lastly a younger man, probably the father of the baby in the araba, a man in the prime of life, once strong and vigorous, as his great frame and deep, bare, shaggy breast show plainly, but now bowed with excessive fatigue, and leaning on a stout stick. His step is uncertain, and the rough swathing worn by the peasants round their feet is almost completely worn away from his. Suffering is written in every line of his face, which has the white-drawn look one is getting to know so well, and which only comes from the combined effects of acutest physical tension and mental anxiety. I cannot venture to give him money, for to give to one is to grant a claim to all—Heaven knows what a good one they have!—and to establish a precedent which would surround us in an instant with fifty others in quite as evil a case as this man. As I turn away, a Turk growls out, "It is the doing of him, and his"—meaning the English. In fact the feeling here is painfully strong against England; fear is the only sentiment with which they now regard us; love is lost and respect is following it, owing greatly to the Russian influence, which is perpetually at work disparaging England and English actions. The episode of the attempted entrance and subsequent retreat of our fleet from the Dardanelles gave rise to many reflections in the Turkish mind—whether true or not it is not for me to discuss—and by it the prestige of England certainly sank several degrees, as witnessed by the insulting placard posted on the Embassy gates. This gratuitous piece of insolence was very significant; in fact, for two or three days every Turk inquired chaffingly, "Where is your fleet?" and the Greeks took up the strain. Such was the valentine which England had the honour of

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receiving at her Embassy from her old love, Russia, this year; for it is notorious that the placards were printed and posted by Russian agents. Considering that the Russians are now actually in the town, the quiet that reigns is rather extraordinary.

One anecdote, showing the state of the town, before closing this letter. Three Englishmen were out shooting on Friday, and when within ten minutes' walk of their own house, were attacked by Pomacks, who drew knives and demanded their valuables. One of the party having a revolver produced it, but, from the extracting rod having slipped into one of the chambers, it would not revolve, and was, consequently, useless. Perceiving this at once, one of the Pomacks walked coolly up, first took the pistol, and then relieved the party of their watches and purses, and let them depart—"with pockets light as the Pomack's heart." No redress was possible.

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 27th.*—The conditions of peace are now sufficiently well known to enable one to form a judgment upon them. They are, no doubt, heavy; but, assuming them to be accepted by Turkey, the practical question is how far they ought to commend themselves to England. The question how far they affect English interests is one which naturally will occupy the first place in Parliament. In discussing it, however, the nation ought not to lose sight of the consideration of how far these conditions will affect Russia herself and South-Eastern Europe generally.

For the sake of the Turkey in Europe which remains, as well as for that of the inhabitants of Asia Minor, it is greatly to be desired that the large indemnity which Russia demands shall be lessened. Bad government has screwed and wrung almost the last piastre out of the population of Turkey, has rendered dozens of villages in Asia Minor desolate, has completely destroyed many branches of industry in the country, and still hampers almost all those which exist to such an extent as to handicap producers. To increase the burdens of those already suffering is terrible. If the money came out of the possession of the ring of Pachas I should not have a word to say, but it will be taken mostly

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from people who not only are not responsible for the war, but have wished God-speed to the invader. The severe lesson which has been given to the Turks may make them take a thought and mend.

The recent dismissal of the Chamber of Deputies does not look very much like it, but at the dictation of the Conference such an institution may become permanent in Turkey, and the proceedings of the Chamber were really the most hopeful signs that Turkey has ever shown. The experiment of bringing men from various parts of the empire, even when these men were all more or less Government nominees, and of expecting them to be content with the existing state of things, failed ludicrously. It became evident, as I stated at the end of last Session and at the beginning of the present, that the Pachas would have to get rid of the Chamber, or the Chamber would get rid of them. If the Conference will provide that the Chamber shall become a necessary part of the Government, I think it may be trusted to get the Pachas into order.

In the Chamber the Christians and the Arabs played the most prominent part, and if it meets again these, by far the most able populations of the empire, will become the most powerful. It is undesirable that their efforts for reform and for pure administration should be weighed down by a financial burden which the country cannot carry. The war indemnity, too, would give Russia a good deal of opportunity of interfering with the Government of Turkey. In the interests of the country it is desirable that there should be the least possible ground for such interference. Without being a Russophobe, I should, to the utmost of my power, insist that the less occasion that could be given to Russia to interfere with the Government of the country, the better for English interests, and for the interests of the inhabitants of what has hitherto been the Turkish empire.

The Greeks of the capital have been delighted to find that in England and in Germany there is a disposition not to allow their claims to be overlooked. It is expedient as well as right that the just claims of the Greeks should be carefully considered at the reorganization of South-Eastern Europe

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which is about to be made. It is right because the Greeks of Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, and Crete ought not to be allowed to remain under such mal-treatment—misgovernment is too mild a word—as they have endured during the last twenty years. It is expedient because the Greeks of Greece evidently have no intention of allowing their fellow-countrymen in enslaved Greece to remain without help. Leave Greece out of account, and the Eastern Question will not be laid to rest as it ought to be for some years.

There are, however, other reasons why Europe ought not to allow the Greeks to be forgotten. They are by their numbers, their history, and their intelligence, the first race in the Empire. Tried by almost any test they are worthy of consideration. No race in Turkey has made such progress. I doubt whether any race in Europe, situated as the Greeks of Turkey were half a century ago, has done so much for its own education. Almost all Greeks read and write. Elementary schools have been established in every Greek village; high schools for both sexes, and literary societies, in the large towns. What has been done for education has come out of the pockets of well-to-do Greeks, who are taunted with want of patriotism because they do not often go to live in Greece. Their intelligence is shown by the fact that the Greek merchants hold their own in every capital in Europe. They have, during the last generation, made a progress both in wealth and in civilization which is without parallel in Europe. Moreover, while the Turkish race is diminishing in numbers around them, they are increasing. Their language is the finest in the Empire, and is rapidly being brought back to a perfection which it has not known for 1,500 years. Their historical traditions, and even their Church, give them aspirations and a national unity which no other race in Turkey possesses. In Constantinople they are probably ten times as numerous as the Bulgarians, and that city will, in all likelihood, again become the capital of a Greek State. Unless there is to be a war, the latter event is in the distance. If there should be a general war, probably Turkey will drop altogether out of the map of Europe.

The important point to be remembered is that the legitimate

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hopes of the Greeks should now be so far satisfied that they may continue to make their progress without such jealousy and envy of Bulgaria as will interfere with the peace of the next few years. We have arrived at a stage in the history of the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and in making the new departure it is important that everything should be cleared for easy running during the next stage. I do not share the jealousy which some of the Greeks display of the progress of Bulgaria; but it is easy to recognize that this jealousy is natural, and that the possibility of Constantinople falling into the hands of any race but theirs is one which should cause a good deal of alarm. If there should be any danger, as during the first few years of its history is quite probable, that Bulgaria should be under the influence of Russia, the best counterpoise against undue Sclav interest would be an extended Greek influence. Whether the Greek provinces I have named be added to Greece or be formed into autonomous States which must inevitably belong to Greece, the Greek populations may be trusted to act together, and from the anti-Russian point of view, a strong Greece will be a useful barrier.

If Roumania and Greece are independent, and Bulgaria rid of the fear of being re-absorbed into Turkey, every year will see these states becoming more populous and anti-Russian. There will be less room than there has ever been for Russian intrigues. Three barriers will have been created against Russian progress southward—three barriers which every year will become stronger—and if the stage we are now entering on last but twenty years, they may be strong enough of themselves to resist Russian invasion, if such be attempted.

On the 14th of February, the British Fleet, under the command of Vice-Admiral Hornby, again entered the Dardanelles, and passing into the Sea of Marmora, took up an anchorage off Prince's Islands. The official statement of the object of this important movement was that it was rendered expedient by the necessity for providing for the safety of British subjects in Con-

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stantinople. The following letters from a correspondent on the shores of the Dardanelles relate to matters which perhaps more than any others, at this period, occupied the attention of Europe :—

:: GALLIPOLI, *February 27th.*—The Turks, if necessary, can make a stronger resistance on the Gallipoli fortifications than is generally supposed. Though Constantinople is virtually in the hands of the Russians, Gallipoli is far from being similarly situated without a severe struggle. Twenty-two thousand Turkish troops are now in the lines of the fortifications, with fifty Krupp cannons of large calibre on the modern system, and thirty-six on the old system. Ammunition trains are constantly leaving for the lines, notwithstanding the probability of the preliminaries of peace being speedily signed. Three ironclads of the British Fleet, with Vice-Admiral Commerell on board, are now here. The *Flamingo* is at Rodosto. Three other vessels of the fleet are at the Gulf of Ismid, with Admiral Hornby, and three more are cruising between Enos and the north-western coast of the Gallipoli Peninsula, in the Gulf of Saros, watching the movements of the Russians. Small-pox is greatly prevalent, especially amongst the refugees here. The sailors and marines of the fleet are not allowed on shore in consequence of the prevalence of this epidemic. Zabit Pacha, the commandant at Gallipoli, has orders to leave for Examile, a village on the other side of the fortifications, to meet the Russian delegate and arrange the neutral ground, the lines of demarcation proposed being two miles on each side of Examile.

:: GALLIPOLI, *March 1st.*—The feeling here is not so universally in favour of peace as it is in Constantinople. The evacuation of the Tchataldja-Chekmejeh lines convinced the Turks in Constantinople that it was the decree of Allah that they should be vanquished, and the most sceptical Turk in the capital gave up all hope of any assistance from England. Even the passage of the Dardanelles by the fleet and its anchoring off Prince's Islands did not change this conviction to any great extent, as everybody felt sure that had England

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meant to render assistance it would have come too late, as the Russians were to all intents and purposes in Constantinople. In Gallipoli, however, I find that the Turks still cling to the hope that their old ally will help them if the conditions of peace be too hard. Although they incline to the belief that England has very little sympathy for Turkey left, yet they feel sure that if British interests be interfered with she will declare war with Russia.

If you tell a Turk here that the two huge ironclads now lying in sight from my window are here to protect British subjects in case of a disturbance, he will correct you, and say, "No, not British subjects, British interests." In addition to the ironclads here there are three at the Gulf of Ismid, one of which is the *Alexandra*, with the admiral on board. There is the *Flamingo* at Rodosto, and three others cruise about in the Gulf of Saros, between Enos and Cape Bakla Burun. These ironclads are watching the movements of the Russians, and their cannon could be brought to command the plain of Kavak, through which the Russians would have to pass in case of an advance towards the fortifications.

Although there is reason to believe that the preliminaries of peace will speedily be concluded, and are possibly signed at the time of writing, yet the Turks are remarkably vigilant here. Almost every day ammunition trains leave for the fortifications, and there are now 22,000 Turkish troops in the lines. In the fortifications there are upwards of 100 cannon, fifty of which are Krupp guns of heavy calibre. It will be thus seen that if necessary the Turks can maintain a very strong resistance at this point. Zabit Pacha, the military commandant of Gallipoli, has received instructions to go to Examile, a village about ten miles on the other side of the fortifications, in order to arrange, with two Russian officers awaiting his arrival there, the lines of demarcation. Examile will be the point selected to mark the line of demarcation, and is situated on the road from Playar to Kavak, it being understood that the Russians occupy positions two and a half kilometres (two miles) from Examile on the Kavak side, while the Turks remain at a similar distance on the side of Playar.

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When I was at Rodosto on the 24th ult. I found there amongst the Russian officers a very general conviction that the Russians were about to enter the capital. A report upon good authority was circulated that that morning 30,000 troops, under the Grand Duke Nicholas, had gone to Constantinople. The day before five battalions had left Rodosto for Selivri, about half-way between Rodosto and the capital. This served to strengthen the report of the Russian occupation, a report which I also found current on my arrival at Gallipoli. Indeed, the English Consul here told me he had received it upon good authority.

Small-pox, especially in the houses where the refugees are quartered, is very prevalent here. Amongst the victims is Mr. Lucas, who was the correspondent of one of your contemporaries at Gallipoli. He died ten days ago. There are daily deaths amongst the refugees from this disease, but the number of deaths is not so large as it was a fortnight since. The sailors and marines from the British Fleet are not allowed to land in case the small-pox should be communicated to those on board.

One battalion, about 450 strong, left yesterday for Crete, and two more will leave as soon as a steamer is placed at their disposition.

Since the arrival of the fleet and the passage of Suleiman's troops through Gallipoli, there has not been a sufficient supply of the necessaries of life to satisfy the requirements of the regular inhabitants, and when it is remembered that there are 5,000 families of refugees here from the Balkans, it cannot be a matter of surprise that necessary articles of consumption cost to-day three times the price they commanded a month ago. It is only what one may call the luxuries of life in the shape of eatables that are to be met with for a reasonable price. Yesterday, for instance, being unable to find anything else, I purchased a brace of plump partridges for 2s., and two dozen large oysters for 8d. It would probably have taken one an hour to find any one who would sell me a loaf of bread, but game of all kinds is hawked through the streets. Indeed, there could not be found a better field for speculation than Gallipoli under existing circumstances.

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Several speculators arrived this morning, and are going to try and get through the lines to Keshan to supply the Russians there with provisions, &c. If they succeed in reaching their destination, and in keeping up the means of communication for obtaining supplies, they will make a small fortune. Apropos of Keshan, I am informed that when the Russians under General Komaroff and Prince Tchirkaski entered the town, they took away all the arms from the Turkish inhabitants, and handed them over to the Christians. The result was that the Christians began to plunder the Turkish houses, and burned several Turkish farms. The Russians have no commissariat there, and the soldiers have to live on what they can get; of course the Turkish population suffer greatly. From an eyewitness of what is going on there, I hear that the situation is but little better than it was in Paris during the last days of the siege, when any animal that could be met with was sold as food, and consumed thankfully as such.

Under the circumstances detailed it is of course a most difficult task to provide for the wants of the refugees in Gallipoli. As far as possible, however, they are assisted by the Government and by Mr. Odoni, the English Consul. This gentleman represents the Compassionate Fund, and divides the labour of relief with the Turkish Government, the latter looking after the male refugees, while the Compassionate Fund gives sixty paras (about 2½d.) a day to each woman, and thirty paras to each child. Mr. Odoni informs me that he distributes about 4,000 piastres daily. This relief, of course, in a great measure alleviates the sufferings of these unfortunates, but the relief would be much greater if it were possible to distribute it in kind. This cannot be done, for there are not sufficient bakers in Gallipoli to supply the requirements of the inhabitants. Indeed, for fear of a bread riot, the bakers' shops are all closed, and it is only for a short time during the day that they open a part of their shutters, through which they supply the eager claimants for food.

I was present yesterday afternoon at one of these distributions, and the sight was a pitiable one in the extreme. The baker was standing on a ladder inside of his shop, in the upper part

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of the barricades of which was an opening about the size of the door through which the public is supplied with railway tickets in England. This opening was just within the reach of a middle-sized man, but it was out of the reach of children and most women. A strong guard of soldiers was in front of the shop, which was besieged by an eager crowd of refugees, each with hands uplifted holding a *caimé* of a piastre or two towards the proprietor of the shop, who as rapidly as possible was handing out the bread and taking in the money. Pushing, hustling, and squeezing against each other, they all strove to reach the opening in the shutters. I did not notice any women amongst the crowd; indeed, if there had been any they would have stood a fair chance of being crushed to death; but round about its outskirts women and children were sitting, anxiously waiting for a chance of getting near the opening in the baker's shutters. One glance at their pinched and haggard faces was enough to tell the sad tale of what they had suffered.

Amongst the crowd I noticed particularly one stalwart Turk, who, though a man of almost gigantic proportions, showed by his sunken eyes and hollow cheeks that he had gone through great privation. The expression of that man's face as he forced himself through the crowd has fixed itself on my memory. It was an expression which said as distinctly as if he shouted the words, "Shall I be too late?" He knew well enough that before long the supply of bread would be exhausted and the porthole in the shop would be closed. At last he succeeded in reaching it. He received two loaves, and at once commenced gnawing at one like a ravenous dog at a bone, holding on to the loaf with one hand while he forced for himself a passage through the crowd with the other. His expression now was one of contentment. It was to me a matter of some surprise that the eager candidates for bread did not come to blows; but during the quarter of an hour that I was a spectator of this scene only once did the soldiery forcibly interfere.

It appears that the soldiers are not allowed to purchase bread from the bakers, as it is supposed that the rations with which they are supplied are sufficient for their requirements. But

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notwithstanding this, whilst I was looking on a soldier tried to force his way through the crowd towards the baker. He was seen by some of the soldiers on guard in the act of endeavouring to purchase a loaf. They immediately arrested him, threw him on the ground, and, in spite of his stubborn resistance, three men quickly had his hands pinioned behind him, and led him off towards the police-station. Then it was—and then only—that a Turkish officer—a disgrace to the uniform he wore—who had been looking on during the affray, walked up and struck the prisoner several severe blows on the face and head with his fists. I have had nearly two years' experience with the Turks, and have never before seen Turkish officers treat their men with anything but kindness. They are all fighting for a common cause, fighting with heavy arrears of pay due to them, and often upon very short rations.

In the letter below a correspondent at Rustchuk describes the surrender of that town to General Todleben in accordance with the terms of the armistice :—

¶ ¶ RUSTCHUK, *February 21st.*—Rustchuk was given up to the Russians yesterday. About 3 P.M. General Todleben, commanding in the place of the Cesarewitch, accompanied by some 200 of the staff, and followed by a brigade of infantry, two batteries of artillery, and four sotnias of Cossacks, advanced to take possession of the town. They were met on the outskirts by a deputation of miserable-looking beings, Bulgarians, who welcomed them as saviours, &c., hat or cap in hand. The General addressed them in a few kind and warning words, shaking his finger at them the while, as if telling them to behave themselves properly. Some week or so ago, before the evacuation, looking through our glasses at the town from the batteries opposite at Slobosia that had done all the bombarding, my friend commanding the Russian artillery told me they had spared the buildings as much as possible, and only aimed at the batteries.

But while we found that many of the latter along the river banks had been effectually silenced by a well-directed fire, we

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found also that the town itself had suffered far more than Giurgevo. About every third house in the western quarter showed signs of having received anything but pleasant visitors. The centre of the town suffered most. The Grande Place looked especially desolate, though now crowded with the horses and carts of the transport train. On one side was the empty skeleton of the Konak; formerly a handsome and imposing building, standing scorched, and blurred, and tottering; the barracks sadly battered on the other. Opposite to them the buildings, whatever they were, had entirely disappeared in a heap of rubbish covering an acre of ground. On the fourth side stood the remains of a large building, the orphan asylum, and the relics of the principal mosque. The outer walls were reduced to an indistinguishable mass of crumbled bricks and mortar. The more solidly built body and dome had resisted the shot and shell, but presented a terribly shattered appearance. Perched on the top of half a minaret that remains, a few pigeons looked down mournfully on the ruins beneath. A little to the right again of the Grande Place, all the houses are riddled and blown inside out in a marvellous manner.

The only inhabitants now are a few dogs occasionally growling at each other over some yet dainty morsel. Most of the houses in the street leading out of this quarter have caught a chance shell or two, and the loss among the inhabitants has been rather heavy. As the Russian troops entered on the western side, through mud almost knee deep, they must have wondered somewhat at the results of their comrades' fire from the Roumanian side of the river; for their own shots, flying over the outlying forts, failed to reach in any case beyond the ditch of the enceinte of the town.

Shortly after the entry of the Russians the last two regiments of Turkish soldiers marched out towards Shumla, accompanied by one or two Russian staff officers, beyond the neutral zone. They were a particularly fine soldierlike set of men, many of whom wondered why, never yet beaten in battle, and without being short of provisions, they should have to give up such a strong place to their enemies without a fight. But their extraordinary belief in Kismet ingrained in them by their

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religion, accounts, perhaps, for the dignified nonchalance with which many an old Turk looks upon the Russian passers-by. The Russian soldiers seem to fraternize readily with such of their enemies as remain in the town; and I have seen more than one case of Turk and Russ walking hand in hand along the streets. I found that the English and French Consuls and all the Red Cross people had left a day or two before for Varna, so my expectations of hearing the incidents of the siege from my own countrymen were disappointed.

In the hotels and inns there was plenty to eat, though not of a luxurious kind or of great variety. This morning at the principal hotel, the General and some sixty officers sat down to breakfast at a horseshoe table well laid out; but it was rather amusing to hear these officers ask for champagne and all kinds of wine, quite forgetting that though in an hotel, they were in a town that had been besieged for months. Provisions in the town, though not in much variety, were plentiful and cheap. The garrison could have held out from six weeks to two months longer. Extraordinary as it may appear, since the influx of foreigners and provisions, everything has risen in price. Some Jews got permission to enter the town before the Russians occupied it, and took all the available shops and stores at a rent of a napoleon or two per month, and when the would-be cunning ones from Bucharest, who were waiting at Giurgevo till the place was open, came in yesterday and tried to hire stores, they found all already let, and to be relet at rents varying from 50 to 300 napoleons per annum. As it is customary to pay rent in these parts in advance, the long term of a year is fixed, though most people want to take places only for two or three months. One proprietor, a Bulgarian, having several houses, was particularly exorbitant in his demands. One of his shops was extremely well situated and convenient, but he refused to let the shop by itself, insisting on letting the whole house, consisting of some eight or nine goodly-sized rooms, and asking 600 napoleons per annum. On looking over the house, it was found to be used as a hospital, full of typhus cases. It is to be hoped, for the sake of the health of the town, that he may not lower his price till all opportunity of letting has passed.

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This morning, after a general scrutiny of the place and its fortifications, General Todleben left for Giurgevo and Bucharest, en route for Russia, leaving General Prince Doudakoff Korsakoff in command. The latter has quartered very few troops in the town, only four battalions, and two squadrons of Cossacks, sufficient for sentries in the enceinte and in the principal streets. He told me he thought it a bad thing to bring troops in from camp life in a campaign into a town, as they not only get into trouble and rows, but become unfit for service again at once.

This morning an inspection was made of all the fortifications. The outlying forts, no fewer than forty in number, are exceedingly well situated, every advantageous feature of the ground having been made the most of; while the construction of the interior of these earthworks excited universal wonder and admiration. Thorough protection is afforded to the garrison when not actually working the guns. They are well housed under cover, in well-built casemates of timber below the parapets. There are also well-built shell stores and powder magazines, and every arrangement for a lengthy sojourn in these earthworks, carried out with as great skill and care as in any fortress that has taken years to build with masonry, and yet all these subterranean arrangements are well and most commodiously built with timber and earth. Preparations had been made to hold the place to the last in anticipation of an assault, though after the experiences of Plevna the besieging army would have found it a very hard nut to crack. Between the outlying forts and the old enceinte the ground is cut up into innumerable small fields, the banks and ditches of which form row upon row of excellent trenches for a defending force; while the outlying streets of the town had been prepared for barricades.

While the Turks held Rustchuk and Widdin they could feel that they had almost as strong a hold on Bulgaria as the invaders; and in the event of complications arising and any European Power interfering, they might, with the help of these strongholds, have regained every inch of the province they had lost.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE RISING OF THE GREEKS.

Corfu and the Corfiotes.—England's Obligations.—The Greek Conscription.—Athens.—Riot and Change of Ministry.—The Greek Army on the Frontier.—Insurrection in Thessaly.—Hopes of English Aid.—Dread of the Turkish Fleet.—Position of Syria.—Crete and the Cretans.—The Position of Thessaly.—No Quarter from the Turks.—Epirus.—Public Excitement.—Armyros.—The Insurgent Headquarters.—The Dead Lock.—The Turkish Irregulars.—Their Mode of Warfare.—Sourp.—The Insurgent Chief, Valenza.—The "Sacred Band" of Thebes.—Cruelties of the Turks.—Hassim Aga.—Outrages by the Turkish Naval Forces.—Nicolaides and his Band of Volunteers.—The Three Chief Centres.—Anxiety regarding Russia.—Chalcis.—Turkish Prisoners at Mintzela.—Return of Volunteer Combatants.—The Mode of Campaigning.—Volunteers bound for Macedonia.—General Soutzo's Force.

ALTHOUGH the rising of the Greeks and the war in Thessaly and Epirus are only incidentally connected with the great struggle between Russia and Turkey, the important position assumed by the Greek nationality in relation to the re-settlement of South-Eastern Europe, gives sufficient interest to the following series of letters to justify their finding a place in this volume.

** CORFU, *February* 11*th*.—The fertile island of Corfu, with its gardens and olive groves, its fortified capital and busy shipping, forms a curious contrast to the wild mountains of Albania, which shut in the eastern view. Here is a very garden of delight and fertility; there, yonder, a tract of stern, desolate rock, with few villages to dot the mountain side, and with long lines of gleaming snow, stretched out above the lower background of green and grey. How near the opposite coast seems to be in this bright atmosphere of Northern Greece. How calm the narrow strait which separates Corfu from the mainland of Albania. It is a scene which I think is scarcely equalled by any of the famous bays

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and harbours of the world, by New York, or the Bay of Naples, or even by the entrance to the Bosphorus from the Sea of Marmora.

But though Corfu is very lovely as a natural scene, and though the frowning ramparts of the citadel tell of many byegone wars, there is not the excitement here just now which we at home associate with these stirring times. The island is neutralized, and its fortress is without modern artillery. Only the night before last the remainder of the troops stationed here took their departure for another point on Greek territory, nearer to the possible scene of action. Military stores have been removed, and everything done to keep Corfu strictly within the limits of neutrality, whatever Greece, as a whole, may be obliged to do. The island is not, in fact, to serve as a base of operations to the forces of King George, and its inhabitants may look at the Turkish territory so near to them without any anxious misgivings about Zeibecks and Bashi-Bazouks.

The whole place (except the ancient citadel) could be overrun and plundered by a force from Albania, if national faith were thrown to the winds; but there lies an English gunboat in the roadstead—Her Majesty's ship *Rapid*—and she would have something to say to such a Turkish expedition. We are bound to see that no harm comes to the Corfiotes, for it is by arrangement with England, at the time of the cession of the Ionian Islands, that no guns are mounted on those Venetian ramparts that have so often baffled the Turks when in the pride of their strength and fury. The Corfiotes of to-day have no siege to fear, and no danger to apprehend for their pleasant farms and fertile gardens. But they have paid their blood tax to the Hellenic Kingdom; they have cheerfully taken a part in sending their best and dearest to the doubtful chances of military service. The troops which departed on Saturday were men of the reserve, the last call, if I mistake not, before the National Guard itself would be summoned. There was much cheering when they marched to the place of embarkation, and what might be called a very good feeling exhibited by all classes. But this conscription had borne heavily on the Corfiotes, and many lads of the

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wealthier families were shouldering a rifle in the ranks. So no wonder that bright eyes were dimmed with tears in the balconies as they passed, and that scores of women moved sadly away after the noise and the confusion were over.

I will not attempt to speak of Greek politics from this corner of the kingdom, but will wait until I get somewhere nearer headquarters. The Greek Company's boats are taken up by the Government for carrying troops, and the only way to go forward is by an Austrian steamer to Syra and the Piræus. As far as I can make out, the Greeks are almost stupefied by the rapid course of events in Turkey. They know not what to do, but are resolved not to abandon their kindred beyond the frontier to Turkish rule, if they can possibly avoid it. The moment is very trying for the people and their rulers, and needs both firmness and prudence to bring them safely through.

** ATHENS, *February 14th.*—The Greeks are wofully puzzled by the turn which events have taken. They have waited for England to move, and have waited in vain; they have counted on Russian support, as a last resource, and seem to have reckoned without their host. In a word, they are almost as completely at sea as the English Government itself, which is saying a good deal. Now that Turkey is beaten and that Russia is inclined, as it appears, to let her old enemy survive, upon certain conditions, the Greeks are clearly "out of the running," so far as Muscovite help is concerned. There was a moment, just after the fall of Plevna, when Greece might have taken part in the war with advantage to herself. But that favourable moment was allowed to slip, and it was only when stung to madness by the feeling of being utterly ignored in the armistice negotiations that the Greeks at length resolved on action.

You have recently heard, by telegraph, how there was a sort of riot in Athens and a change of Ministry and an advance to the Thessalian frontier. You have also heard, I doubt not, how the foreign representatives worked upon M. Coumoundouros to induce him to hold his hand. If Greece persisted

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in attacking Turkey she was to be left to her fate—Syra and the Piræus were to be at the tender mercy of Hobart Pacha, and the Englishbuilt fleet of the Sultan was to work its will, far and wide, upon the Greek seaports. This threat was enough to cause the invasion of Thessaly to be countermanded, and, after a few days of horrible panic at Syra, things settled down again into their ordinary course. The Greek army remained upon the frontier, and there it still remains, eager for a second order to advance. The Greek people continued its warlike preparations, and everything on the political horizon was as dark and confused as before. Whatever the politicians of Athens may have intended, the Christians of Thessaly have been thoroughly aroused by hearing that their countrymen were so near at hand, and the insurrection has spread from village to village with surprising rapidity.

It will be very difficult for Greece to stand by and see these Thessalian insurgents reduced to submission at the point of the bayonet. Yet how is King George's army to deal at the same time with both Russia and Turkey? That is what it really comes to. At any rate, the Greeks in general appear to think so. They fully accept the theory of an alliance between Turk and Muscovite, and they sigh over the blindness of England in not warmly supporting the Hellenic factor in the Eastern Question. Of course there may be some blindness on their own part in thus thinking. I only give you the current opinion for what it is worth. But certainly on returning, as I have, to Greece at a very critical moment, there is nothing which strikes me so much as the tone of angry disappointment about Russia, and the hope, so freely expressed, that England will now make common cause with the Greeks. Nothing would be more popular in Greece just now than a war, with England as an ally, against both Turkey and Russia together.

It is very cold whilst I write, and the mountains are covered with snow. But there is a clear sky overhead, and a pleasant glow of sunshine to justify the reputation of the Athenian climate. We had fine weather all the way from Corfu to Cape Matapan, and then a strong westerly wind with torrents

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of rain, which continued for the remainder of the voyage to Syra. At that busy port things were not particularly cheerful. The weather was gloomy, and the inhabitants had scarcely recovered from their panic of a week ago. They still half expected the arrival of Turkish ironclads, although some one, to encourage them, had invented the report that the whole Turkish fleet had been bodily handed over to Russia. Nay more, it was already manned by Russian sailors, and was about to give battle to Admiral Hornby. You can judge from such a specimen of Syra gossip how ready men were to believe anything and everything that went the way of their wishes. A Turkish fleet in Russian hands would be a blockaded fleet before very long, and this was just what the islanders desired. "Save us from Hobart," was their cry, "and we will pay what you like towards a war on land."

The position of Syra is, in fact, very exposed to an enemy who had the command of the sea. The rich unfortified town lies conveniently near to a safe anchorage, where the bombarding fleet could take up a snug berth in any state of wind and weather. All the commercial progress of forty years, all the comfortable houses and well-filled storerooms of the islanders, their shipyards, and their crowd of coasting craft might be destroyed in a few hours, if a hostile squadron once began the fatal work. It seems to be an understood thing among civilized nations that sailors are privileged beings who may burn and destroy at pleasure, where their military friends would be called brutes for firing a shot. No plea of defencelessness is admitted to protect you from ironclads. There is almost a feeling of scientific gusto in the way in which professional men talk of "opening fire with splendid effect" at so many thousand yards. They seem to expect the landlubbers who suffer from this fire to enjoy the sense of doing some good in the world when they are used as targets for heavy guns.

Such being the case, no wonder that Syra was anxious at the thought of a visit from Hobart Pacha. No wonder that the islanders derived comfort from seeing three foreign men-of-war anchored in the harbour. An Austrian, a German, and an Italian vessel lay watching the town during my stay. But

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beyond "protesting" and recording their protests at the different consulates, and taking their consuls on board, I do not quite see what they would have done for Syra had the Turks really appeared.

Athens itself is very empty. The military are all, or nearly all, away on the northern frontier. Many families have gone abroad to get out of possible danger. There are comparatively few strangers in the hotels, and it is altogether a particularly dull winter season, in spite of the constant stir in politics and the angry bustle of the demonstrations in the latter part of January. Even the lively, quick-witted Greeks are not inclined to look over-cheerfully at their present position.

** ATHENS, *February 16th.*—I wonder whether any person in this city really knows what is passing beyond the Turkish border. My own impression is that no one has the least idea how many insurgents are actually under arms, nor how many Turks are ready to oppose them, nor how much of the country is now freed from Turkish rule.

The Greek Government, which may make a shrewd guess at some of these details, is surprised, from hour to hour, by news of fresh risings in Thessaly and Epirus, whilst, as to Crete, that island seems to have thrown off all pretence of acknowledging the Sultan's authority. The stone has been set rolling, and neither King George nor M. Coumoundouros can stop it, even if they would. These Greek provinces have suffered much in years gone by, and are, at last, thoroughly roused against their old oppressors. They are well provided with arms, and will not submit to be drilled into obedience without a desperate struggle. It is most of all in Crete that the Christians have now the upper hand. There are so few soldiers at the disposal of the Turkish Governor that he can only hold the fortified towns upon the sea-coast, and has not a chance, at present, of repeating the cruel exploits of Mustapha Pacha among the up-country villages. Unless strong reinforcements should be sent to Crete within the next few weeks the island will shake itself so completely free that Turkey would need a couple of campaigns to reduce it to submission.

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All the small outlying forts and block-houses would be captured, so that the Turks would have to begin again at the point where they found themselves in 1867. The cautious fort-building tactics of Hussein Abni Pacha and the delusive constitutional promises of Ali Pacha would all have gone for nothing, and the Turks would have to recommence their conquest at the very beginning. Though Crete is under the disadvantage of being cut off from Greek assistance by the superiority of Turkey at sea, there is more than a balance for this in the rugged nature of the country and the warlike character of the inhabitants. Your Cretan is a man who has fought his master again and again with tolerable success, and who is ready, at a moment's notice, to have another try. Give him plenty of arms and ammunition, and it will require an Osman Pacha, with half the Plevna garrison, to do much towards subduing him. When we remember what havoc was wrought among the Turks in 1867 by the rifles and muskets —some even flintlock muskets—which the insurgents then possessed, we may form a dim idea of what might now be expected when Crete is well supplied with the best modern weapons.

As for Thessaly, there is neither so favourable a formation of the country, nor so warlike a Christian population, to oppose the Turks. But Thessaly is much better off in one way than any other insurgent province. It is supported by the immediate presence of a disciplined Greek army, with cavalry and artillery, which could cross the frontier in the easiest manner possible, and bring fearful odds to bear upon those famous Turkish irregulars. The frontier has been already passed and repassed, as every one knows, since this month of February began, and, with all their disadvantages, the Thessalian insurgents are encouraged by the knowledge that countrymen of the Greek Kingdom are angry and armed and close at hand. There will be trouble, you may depend on it, if these same Thessalian insurgents are worsted by the Turks, which may very likely be the case. There will be trouble of the simple and intelligible kind, which consists in nothing being able to hold back the Greeks from interfering. They simply cannot stand by to see their kindred butchered within

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sound of the cries of the victims. Right or wrong, the Rubicon was crossed when the Greeks make their forward movement early in the month. Thousands of Thessalians, as I hear, flew to arms, believing that the day of deliverance was at hand, and when diplomatic pressure made the Greek army fall back to its own territory the political mischief had been done. Thessaly, hitherto wavering, had chosen the path of insurrection, and nothing lay before the wretched Christian villagers who had thus committed themselves but victory or death.

The Turks make war, as usual, upon their grand old "historic" plan of giving very little quarter. We have constant accounts of massacre and outrage, accounts which may some of them be exaggerated, but which are, at any rate, believed in Greece, and the national feeling is wrought to the highest point. In such a state of affairs the position of the Greek army, so near its foe yet not allowed to strike, is terribly trying. It speaks well for the discipline of King George's men that they can be held in hand as much as they are. No wonder that we have news of several desertions, in which young soldiers, burning for action, have slipped away over the frontier and joined the insurgent bands. It would be impossible to prevent such unauthorized volunteering for special service, and however vexed the military authorities may be at finding awkward gaps in the ranks, the nation is by no means displeased to learn that the Thessalians are receiving this round-about sort of help.

From Epirus we only gather the outline of a situation full of danger and excitement. The Christians of that province are slowly but surely gliding into a general insurrection. There have already been several slight skirmishes; and it is said that the Turks are everywhere falling back to their fortified positions. This last detail I rather doubt, but they are certainly in some danger should no help soon reach them, as the Christians are very numerous in comparison with the ruling caste, and have been well supplied with breechloaders by friends at a distance. Whatever the exact value, in a military point of view, of the Epirote movement, it will at least have the effect of preventing the despatch of any Turkish troops

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from Southern Albania into Thessaly. It is there that the critical struggle of the day is to take place. If Thessaly can only be freed for a moment from the Turks, people here think that they will not be allowed to return thither as masters. No Congress or Conference would re-impose them on a province already free, nor would a formal request, *à la mode des Pachas*, with all its accompanying horrors, be for a moment tolerated. Every scrap of news, therefore, from Thessaly is eagerly waited for in Athens and as eagerly discussed by high and low.

The various telegrams flashed to Athens and to all Europe, which, ere you receive this letter, will have told you of fighting in this and that village on the Thessalian frontier, have produced a great impression among the Greeks. Public excitement is kept up by the thought that blood is being shed, women and children killed or mutilated, so near the outposts of the national army. A strong effort is sure to be made to induce the Government to let that army advance northwards again, and even if this effort should not succeed, there will be a continued state of agitation and anxiety so long as the wild work of which we hear is going on in Thessaly. The inhabitants of Athens will soon come to the point of exclaiming, "Perish the Piræus," if this sort of thing goes on. They will make their Government invade Thessaly, even at the risk of bombardment by the Turkish fleet. There is a certain point beyond which prudence cannot be counted on. I do not say that this point has yet been reached, but we are getting nearer to it every day.

* * INSURGENT HEADQUARTERS, NEAR ARMYROS, *March 2nd.*—The position of affairs in this part of Thessaly reminds me of the dead-lock which occurred more than once during the Cretan insurrection. Neither side was strong enough to bring the other to battle with any prospect of advantage, and the opponents faced each other, watchfully resolved not to make the first false step. Then, as now, it was the Turk who held the fortresses, and the insurgent who occupied the open country. Then, as now, the native Mohammedans of the province were quite unable to assert their right to be a domi-

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nant caste without aid of disciplined battalions from other parts of the Empire. Crete would have been free over and over again if the Cretan Turks had been left to fight their own battles. It was only the arrival of reinforcements of regular troops and the strict blockade of the island by Hobart Pacha that brought the insurrection to an end. So will it be this time if Thessaly be destined to sink once more under the Turkish yoke.

The mere fact of there being an insurrection in the province, coupled with the fact of a few obstinate and bloody skirmishes, which prove the insurgents to be in grim earnest in their work, is enough to deprive the Turks of everything but their fortified strongholds. They collapse at once into an attitude of dogged defence, or sally fiercely out at intervals, to burn a village or two it may be, and to get pitilessly knocked about by their active foe. All those gallant cut-throats, Zeibecks, Albanians, and the like, who were so lordly and terrible a few months ago—so clever at extorting money, so reckless in inflicting pain—are brushed away from the scene with marvellous ease by a little systematic shooting down. They don't like being shot, and are soon as shy of the mountain side as a doctor is said to be of taking his own prescriptions. Nothing would be more simple for them to do than to climb up from yonder town, which seems almost at our feet, and try the mettle of these stern, weather-beaten men who are crouching by hundreds among the grey rocks and stunted brushwood. But it would be a costly experiment, and the Turks prefer to remain quietly in Armyros. They have no fear of being assailed in their stronghold by an enemy without artillery, and they calmly abandon the open country to any roving bands of insurgents that choose to traverse it.

I have spoken of the town of Armyros as seeming almost at our feet. There is, indeed, a magnificent view over a large part of Thessaly from this rugged hilltop, where the insurgents are posted. We stand among the ruins of the citadel of ancient Halos. There are huge blocks of stone around us, evidently the remains of a Cyclopæan wall, and some parts of the time-worn rampart might still be used as shelter in

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case of attack. Below us, to the northward, is a vast and fertile plain, bounded by a distant range of mountains, and behind this first barrier are to be seen the snow-covered summits of Ossa and Olympus, shining like silver clouds on the horizon. To the north-east is the Gulf of Volo, with the town of that name, shut out from our sight by a jutting point of rocks. But Pelion is clearly visible, and we can detect several white specks upon its side which are villages held by the insurgents. They are in some danger, it is said, just now of sharing the fate of Platanos, for the Turkish force lately engaged in this district has gone in great part to Volo, and Muchlif Pacha is supposed to mean mischief. Be that as it may, the view is very fine and we can fully realize how easily every movement of the Turks is watched from the insurgent position. They cannot send a corporal's guard out of Armyros without being observed, and, if necessary, checked, whilst it must be almost impossible for them to gather recent news of what the insurgents are doing.

Of course, they know pretty accurately the numbers of their foe, and have, I doubt not, a general idea of his present position. But he can always gain half a day upon them for any particular movement, which is of immense advantage in irregular warfare. Mitzas, for instance, marched across yonder plain without opposition, and has captured, we hear, a Turkish convoy on his way to Pelion. Other insurgent bands are likely soon to follow, and the garrison of Armyros is not thought to be strong enough or active enough to stop them. The fact is that the Turks are wofully dispirited by the defeats of their main army in Roumelia, and by the presence of the Russians before Constantinople. It seems hopeless thankless work to fight on in Thessaly, when all is lost in Thrace. Many of the native Thessalian Mohammedans are looking anxiously to the future, and begin to see that even if this insurrection should be put down, the province cannot be ruled much longer by Stambouli Pachas, but must soon be joined to Greece. In such a case it would be imperative on them to come to some sort of terms with their Christian neighbours. The Thessalian Turks would have quietly submitted, for the most part, to

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a force of regular troops. This many of them are reported to me to have said during these last few weeks, and I can fully believe them. But they can scarcely be expected to welcome irregular bands of insurgents, of whose retaliation some of them have good reason to be afraid.

You must not fancy that the insurgent headquarters on the rugged hilltop are very snug or well furnished. There are no quarters at all, in one sense; for the ancient ruins around us do not supply a roof overhead, and there is only the bracing out-door life of a long and exciting picnic. The weather, fortunately, is fine and mild at present, but it has been very severe for the time of year in Greece, and the insurgents have suffered great hardships. They look none the worse for these, however, and are in capital fighting condition, despite their ragged clothing. As we sit under the lee of a rock, with these picturesque figures in large grey capotes clustering near us, and the meat that is to form our midday meal is roasting slowly over the ashes of a wood fire, I am reminded of many pleasant days on the Cretan mountains when Omar Pacha was threatening the insurgents of that ilk with destruction. Here is the same good old cause of Liberty against Despotism—the same bright southern sky, and the familiar accents of the Greek tongue chanting patriotic war-songs. We were not always lucky enough to have such a hearty meal in Crete, for there was not a base of operations like that which we now possess. An unarmed traveller may cross and recross the Greek frontier into Thessaly as often as he likes, so that our stronghold near Armyros is well supplied with food. The most serious drawback to the comfort of the insurgents is the shadow of a dreadful tortured death, which always hangs over them.

The Turkish irregulars make war as their forefathers made it. No mercy to a fallen foe is the rule of the whole tribe. Let but one bullet bring you down on the mountain side and you are a murdered man ten minutes later, if the Turks be advancing. This is a serious reflection, and makes my wild companions in Thessaly keep a bright look-out. They play a game in which the forfeit was death, and perhaps torture, so you must allow them a little vigour of action in return. Yet

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I find, to my great contentment, that every effort is being made by the insurgent chiefs to prevent any unnecessary or wanton violence, even to Turkish irregulars. All hands seem to feel that we are in a state of transition from our old policy to a new, and that the Greek proverb "Better a wise enemy than a foolish friend" is at this moment singularly appropriate. The insurgents have to look to a final settlement, as well as the Thessalian Turks; and when I asked whether it would be possible to burn Armyros (of course, merely as a military speculation), I was told that unless they could occupy the town it was no use attacking it, for it would soon be Greek.

There was a reckless destruction of property by the Turks at Platanos, which has done their cause great harm—I ought to say, which has increased the feeling against them; for their cause, as such, is hopelessly lost already. They had unsuccessfully attacked the village—as all the world has heard—on two occasions, and the inhabitants had fled to Sourpi under the fire of the Turkish gunboat, which killed five women and three children. But Platanos was still uninjured, and the insurgents merely withdrew to the mountains behind the village, through want of ammunition. Then came a troop of Turkish irregulars, and set fire to the whole place, so that the wretched inhabitants (now in Sourpi) have nowhere to go when peace is restored. As the war is none of their making, their case is peculiarly hard. They are left utterly destitute for the time in their refuge on Greek soil, and any charitable aid which friends at a distance might send them would be relieving a very real distress.

Even as I write we can see a convoy of women and children creeping back cautiously from the ruins of their homes, after having picked out such articles as were not quite destroyed. The sad procession winds slowly along the foot of the hill, with mothers of families carrying great bundles on their backs, and sturdy children tottering under the weight of the salvage they are trying to secure. Poor scraps of furniture and firewood it will be, after all; but when one is homeless and destitute, every little helps. As I watch the faces of my rough insurrectionary neighbours on the hill-side, I should

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strongly advise any small detachment of Turks from Armyros not to come out and interrupt that convoy. Some of them would get hurt, I am sure.

The journey from Gardiki to Sourpi, which was my last stage before reaching the actual scene of the insurrection, is through a wild and hilly country, with the worst of roads to travel, and with occasional glimpses of lovely scenery to right and left. One mounts up from the coast line to a considerable elevation in order to reach the backbone of the ridge that separates Gardiki from the valley of Sourpi. There is a glorious moment, from the point of view of the picturesque, when Parnassus is still in sight to the southward, and far away Olympus opens grandly into view to the northward. The Gulf of Volo, the mountains of Eubœa, and the open sea, like a blue patch in the distance are all to be clearly distinguished, and one could not wish for a fairer scene. Then the road winds down to the valley of Sourpi, and we travel along the bank of the little brook that separates Greece from Turkey. What a frontier between two independent States! A child could jump it with a moderate run. No wonder that bands of volunteers can easily pass it in the night—even if the local authorities were keener to stop them than they are said to be. Down from the higher ground, we wind to the flimsy frontier line, and so to the little town, the terminus of postal and telegraphic communication, which seems quite a fashionable resort when looked back upon from the open hill-side, from the ruins of the ancient rampart and the open air feast of the *Pallikars*.

* * SOURPI, *March 3rd.*—I left the Thessalian insurgents in their strong position on the hill-top near Armyros, described in my last letter, and after a hearty leave-taking with their indefatigable chief, Valenza, proceeded to visit the Greek volunteers at a village called Kaleria, not far away. It is only fair, in dealing with this insurrection, to distinguish between the native-born rebels who are trying to shake off the Turkish yoke, and the sympathizers from outside who have come to help them. I well remember how fiercely our philo-Turks of 1867 denied that any real Cretans were engaged

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in their effort against Turkey, setting everything down to Greek volunteers or Garibaldians; and if the philo-Turks of to-day have any heart left in them, I suppose they will do the same once more. It is only fair, then, to distinguish between the two classes of persons now in arms in Thessaly, and to bring out boldly the fact that the Thessalians themselves are coming well to the front on their own behalf. They are not so well armed as the volunteers, but are far more numerous, and are led by native gentlemen of good means, who have plenty to risk besides their lives.

Their chief in this district, Captain Valenza, has, it is true, received his military training in Greece, but he is of a well-known Thessalian family, and has under him some of the most solid men in the district. Thus much for one part of the force, and now for the volunteers. They are suprisingly few in number, when we consider the impression they have made on the Turks and the encouragement which their presence certainly affords to the Thessalians. You might imagine from the frequent mention of different leaders' names that there were thousands of these active sympathizers in the field. But the volunteer bands are very small, so that we hear of Mitzas and Nicolaides, of Zikas and of the Hieros Sochos, from Thebes, without reaching the sum total of half a Prussian battalion on a war footing. I do not say this in any tone of depreciation, for the very smallness of their number makes the pluck and audacity of the volunteers all the more remarkable. It is only to give you a just idea of the proportion of things out here that I come to these searching statistics. There must be four or five times as many, if not eight or ten times as many, Thessalians engaged in the insurrection as there are of outside sympathizers, so that the movement cannot be said to be an artificial one kept up by outsiders alone. Men are taking part in it who, as I have said above, have plenty to lose besides their lives, and the most that the volunteers can pretend to do is to give compactness and energy to the insurrection at a particular point.

But now let us scramble down the hill from the insurgent headquarters, and passing an abandoned Turkish guard-house, strike off along the edge of the fertile plain towards Kaleria.

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Our guide, philosopher, and friend on the occasion is the twin brother of the gallant captain left upon the hill-top. He is as full of zeal in the civil department of the insurrection as his brother is in the military. The *mot d'ordre* of both the Valenzas appears to be "full speed ahead." Nor is M. Petelas, that stoutest and most jovial of insurgent secretaries, to be forgotten on our ride. His appearance alone is a guarantee that we shall get a cheerful view even of the enemy's scouts if they heave in sight. An outdoor life in winter, roughing it, and hardships of every kind, seem rather to agree with him than otherwise. We chat merrily by the way, and are reminded of what may be called the possibilities of our situation by the keen attention with which the insurgents who accompany us watch every human being that we see to right or left.

There is no danger on this particular road, for the Turks are at some distance, but one cannot be too careful when it is a question of keeping on one's head, and the Turkish irregulars might show a historic promptness in the opposite sense should they come across us. I think that this slight shade of uncertainty gives zest to the ride. At any rate, the time flies quickly enough, and we are presently at the outskirts of Kaleria, where the Hieros Sochos is stationed. The ordinary inhabitants have taken refuge in Sourpi for fear of an attack by the Turks, and the Theban lads have the village all to themselves. They are quietly employed in cleaning their arms, in cooking, in mending their clothes, or in any of the other hundred small duties of camp life when we arrive, and seem to have taken very patiently to the less pleasant and exciting part of a soldier's life. I notice that their Chassepôt rifles are kept in excellent order, and that they are as smart and cleanly in their personal turn-out as can be expected after the rough time they have been having.

This "Sacred Band" of Thebes is more like a crack volunteer corps among ourselves in its constituent elements than like the rank and file of a regular army. If they only get fighting enough to keep them in good spirits, they will do famously, but I should fear they would find the continued hardships of mountain campaigning very trying. However, they seem in

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the best of spirits thus far, much comforted, no doubt, by having arrived in time for the affair at Platanos, where they showed a most commendable *élan*. It is a pity that there are only two hundred of them. But one cannot expect the whole force to take part in a dangerous expedition beyond the frontier. The Theban lads in Thessaly are much in the case of a picked party of volunteers from a volunteer corps, such as we may often see on foreign service if England should ever be hard pressed to hold her own. Their white gaiters and *fustanellas*, their black caps and shaggy grey capotes, would make a capital uniform for a whole army intended to serve in mountain warfare. Though there are only a couple of hundred of them they have made quite a name for themselves in this insurrection.

Angered by the resistance they met with and by the checks they have sustained, the Turks are guilty of many harsh and cruel acts in Thessaly. A certain Hassim Aga is reported to have massacred several Christian women the day before yesterday, and each refugee who arrives in Greece brings news of fresh outrages. I do not dwell very much upon this part of the question, because our home public has grown accustomed to read of wholesale butcheries, which throw into the shade anything yet done in Thessaly. But I must, from all that I can gather, support the complaint of the Greeks that their insurgent friends are goaded into acts of reprisal by the brutal violence of the Turkish troops.

It has been earnestly wished to limit the efforts of the insurgents to attacks upon armed men in the Government employ, and to injure the peaceful Mohammedans of the province as little as possible. It has been wished to do by the clumsy means of the insurrection what Europe seems foolishly to have forbidden to be done by the natural and proper mode of a military occupation of the province by Greece. But the task of thus sparing Turkish property has been almost an impossible one. The insurgents have up to this time committed no wanton massacres of Turkish families, in which they have shown much more humanity than their opponents; but they have been obliged to destroy a good deal of property. At one place some mills were burned to cut off the enemy's supply

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of food. At another place a whole village had to be set on fire to dislodge its Turkish garrison. These things are part of the hard necessity of the time, and lie at the door of those foreign diplomatists who are leaving the Thessalian question to work its own solution. We cannot expect the rough-and-ready insurgents, who are risking their lives for their country's cause, to make war in kid gloves, whilst the Turks are recurring again and again to their bad habit of intimidation by massacre.

Only this morning we have news of more people killed near Volo, and it is certain that even those who are lucky enough to live in the garrison towns go in terror of their lives from the Turkish irregulars. Nothing seems capable of drumming into your genuine Turk a decent respect for non-combatants. He has got his own fierce narrow rule of right and wrong, and cannot be tamed by any amount of public opinion. After all, what is public opinion to a Zeibeck or Albanian? He reads no newspapers and cares not a jot for any remarks made upon him at a distance. Let foreign critics say what they like, his justification is ready to hand in the shape of sword and rifle. Force is his supreme law, and he cares for no other.

But the Turkish navy ought to show a little more humanity. The ships are manned by regulars, not by Bashi-Bazouks, and are under responsible command. All the more painful is it therefore to find a case of reckless cruelty brought up against the Turkish navy. Thus it stands:—On the day of the battle at Platanos a number of women and children were escaping from the scene of danger, and hurrying along the road at the foot of the hills, which leads across the Greek frontier to Sourpi. A Turkish war-ship (I have not been able to ascertain her name) came across the Gulf of Volo and opened fire upon these helpless fugitives. The range was long, and it may be said that the women and children were mistaken for retreating insurgents. But I have by actual observation tested it as a fact that with a moderately good glass—far less powerful than is carried on every ship of war, the women, and especially the children, could be clearly distinguished at the distance from which the Turkish

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fire was directed. What was the meaning of this brutal attack? It could not assist the troops that were engaged in the valley beyond, and had only the wretched purpose of killing five poor terrified women and three of the little ones they were trying to save. Such acts of wanton barbarity do more to rouse the Thessalians to resistance than to awe them into submission.

We have news to-day that Nicolaides, with his small band of volunteers, mostly composed of Greek students, has broken away in the direction of Pelion and passed safely through the Turkish lines. This is only another illustration of how completely the open country is free to the insurgents to circulate at pleasure. Any armed party strong enough to encounter a stray patrol of Turks can go pretty much where it chooses, and has little or nothing to fear from the enemy. They are for the most part shut up in the principal towns, and do not venture forth except in considerable strength. The insurrection is spreading far and wide, and, though but on a small scale as yet in the way of actual fighting, must be an immense annoyance to the Turkish authorities. The rule of the province seems to be slipping from their hands, though they can force their way in any given direction with more or less sacrifice of life.

At this moment there are three chief centres—one in the district of Armyros; another east of Volo, on the slopes of Pelion; and a third towards the border line of Epirus, near Karditza and Phanari. In each of these centres there have been several battles—as they call them hereabouts—or rather obstinate skirmishes, in which the Turks have been generally worsted; and in each there is a local revolutionary government acting on behalf of the insurgents. I understand that similar movements are planned for the districts around Olympus, and even for part of Southern Macedonia, so the Sultan's representatives will soon have a lively time of it. Their old imperial prestige is quite destroyed by recent events further north, and nothing but the arrival of a large disciplined force of men of the Plevna stamp will enable the Turks to crush out this rebellion of their Greek subjects. Of course it would be possible for Turkey—if she be, as we hear,

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really at peace with Russia—to collect an army in Thessaly which no insurgent bands could dream of resisting. The Thessalians look very anxiously for political news, and are half afraid that Russia may be content to let them perish, now that she has saved all her Sclavonian friends. But matters have gone too far for the province readily to submit. No mere talking about reform will do for men whose lives are at stake, and if the Conference should wish to pacify Thessaly, it must be done by outside pressure. The insurgent will not lay down his arms, with the prospect of having his throat cut the next minute; and the Turk can hardly be blamed for shrinking from any kind of surrender to irregular bands of Greeks or Thessalians.

The village of Sourpi is full of refugees from Thessaly. I have already mentioned their presence in a casual way, but I must say a word more about them before closing this letter. They are in very great distress—homeless, ruined, and almost starving. The Greek authorities do what they can for them, only just enough to keep body and soul together; and it is sad to think how ill the poor creatures will fare when their small stock of clothing saved from the wreck becomes exhausted. Scarcely any shelter is to be found for the refugees in this over-packed frontier village. We are all of us lodged somewhat like sardines in a tin, but the families from Thessaly are certainly in the worst case of all, for they have so many old and infirm people and tiny children to provide for. It is very touching to see how patiently they bear the hardships of their lot. The storm of politics and war has come and swept them away from comparatively comfortable homes to the utter squalor and wretchedness of their present refuge. Would that some of our kind and open-handed people at home could send them a little help.

** CHALCIS, *March 6th.*—I date this letter from Chalcis, as that is our point of departure, but we are making such an early start that most of what I am going to say will be written after the Eubœan port is left far behind, to be posted at the first chance that may occur.

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Since you heard from me in Thessaly and on the Greek frontier at Sourpi I have been constantly on the move, and have acquired, much additional information respecting the insurrection. From the snug little haven of Mintzela, or Amaliopolis, we steamed round to the northern end of Eubœa, where we took up many passengers, and then headed for the Lamian Gulf. There was, first and foremost, a glorious view of Pelion as we passed out of the Gulf of Volo. The great mountain is now topped with snow, and the villages upon its side look like stray patches of the same white covering, which has slid down towards the Turkish stronghold. There is Makrinitza, famous for the recent repulse of Mouchlif Pacha, and there are other spots soon to be heard of, it may be, as fighting ground for the insurgents. Pelion is alive with bands of armed men, who set the Pacha at defiance, and if only the Turks were reinforced to the proper point for bearing down all opposition there would be some hard fighting in the Volo district. But, as it is, I do not think that the Turkish commander will risk the tremendous loss necessary to stamp out his active opponents. He will content himself with attacking them in a cautious fashion, which can lead to nothing decisive, and will spare his dispirited soldiery the thankless task of storming Pelion in the old dashing Suleiman Pacha style, that heaped up the Shipka Pass with Turkish dead. With Russians at Constantinople, and a Conference of the Powers in a mood favourable to Greece clearly impending, it is not to be expected that beys and agas and pachas should show their ancient vigour. They are playing a lost game, and many of them would rather come to terms with the Greeks than risk their lives in exterminating them. Many more have no heart left for fighting, on account of the wretched condition in which their Government has allowed them to exist during the last year or two.

I saw, at Mintzela, a party of Turkish prisoners—captured when the regular Greek troops were in Thessaly—who seemed quite content with their present lot, and would not avail themselves of the polite suggestion that they should take boat for Volo. Being told that they were free, they exercised their freedom by remaining on Greek territory. The having

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been absolutely without pay for a long time past had produced a demoralizing effect on these sturdy-looking Moslems. It seemed to be no object of interest to them at all to have another slap at the unbelievers. They knew the hollowness alike of victories and defeats upon nothing a day. The Greek authorities were making them, I understood, some small allowance in way of pay and rations from a feeling of courtesy to guests whose visit was forced, and the prisoners chose to remain.

Whilst we are touching on the subject of unpaid or "hard up" combatants, it is as well to deal with one feature of the Greek insurrection, which is very likely to be misunderstood abroad, I allude to the frequent return of volunteer sympathizers from the scene of action, before any definite point has been reached in the struggle for which they volunteered. There is, of course, an almost comic side to some of these abrupt reappearances from the field of glory. But, as a rule, they only mean that particular individuals mistook their vocation in adopting the *rôle* of armed insurgents, and have to slip out of a false position as well as they can. Some volunteers are slightly wounded, and are best out of the way. Others are mere lads of sixteen and seventeen, who have bolted from home to fight for freedom, and have completely broken down in health on the bleak mountain side. Others again are old campaigners, who have forgotten their age and stiffness, and thought to run and climb as of yore, and have found that it will not do. These are the most honourable and reasonable of the returns to peaceful life. Then there are some less worthy homeward-bound travellers, who went forth without any wish to fight, merely for what they could get in advance from patriotic committees and the like. These men are far better away, and their loss is not regretted by the insurgents you may depend.

Last of all, I will mention a numerous class among those who return—a class which can neither be much blamed nor completely excused for its conduct. There are dozens of volunteers slipping away every week into Greece simply to obtain fresh supplies or fresh clothing, or to have a peep at their friends, but always with an honest intention to go back and

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fight it out. The want of food amongst the insurgents and the scarcity of several kinds of ammunition required for the rifles of various systems to be found in their army quite explain the difficulty of keeping a force together with the precision of regular warfare. Certain chiefs in certain districts make head against the Turks; all the country sympathizes with them, and a great part of it gives them active aid. The Turkish force is more or less blockaded in the principal towns. It tries to shake off the insurgents by attacking them here and there, to drive them further away. Then there is a sharp skirmishing, and the Turks, whether claiming the victory or not, return to their strongholds with loss.

This is how the insurrection goes forward, and this mode of campaigning makes it matter very little if a few score of Greek sympathizers disappear from the scene for any of the reasons above mentioned. Some of them are better away, some will presently return, and, meanwhile, the insurrection goes steadily forward, gaining ground slowly but surely in one district after another. We should make a grave mistake to suppose that the constant coming and going of individual volunteers, or even of small detachments, shows the movement to be either drawing to an end, or instantly about to succeed. I have met many Greeks who were much discouraged at seeing unwounded volunteers coming away from Thessaly, and others who were just as much (and as unreasonably) cheered by the sight of a handful of likely lads travelling in the opposite direction. The fact is that this insurrection is a large and serious movement, though the fighting is on a small scale at particular points, and that it may go struggling on for several months without any such decisive results as we have grown accustomed to in modern warfare. The Turks cannot put down the insurrection without a vastly greater force than they now possess in Thessaly, and the insurgents cannot take the Turkish strongholds except by the wearisome process of blockade.

As we steamed along the coast of Eubœa we saw a small steamer crowded with men, said to be volunteers bound for Macedonia. There were no Turkish cruisers to be seen in

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the offing, so it is very probable that the landing was safely effected somewhere near Mount Olympus, where the little blockade-runner should have arrived by sunset. I heard that these volunteers were well armed, and well provided with food for the first week or two of their campaign. They would be able to make a long march through the mountains without turning aside to procure supplies, and might arrive in the very nick of time to help the Macedonian villages, which are said to have lately risen. I was also informed, as a matter of satisfaction and hope, that there was excellent discipline among the band which passed us. It is very important that this should be the case, for the great difficulty in the way of all irregular warfare is the want of confidence among the peasantry, which a want of discipline is sure to produce. With help at hand from every village, and with all the peasants on his side, an insurgent chief can do almost anything, whilst without it his movements are paralyzed. This is why the occupation of Thessaly by the Greek army would have been so much easier a task than its conquest by an insurrection, however well conducted. The Turks themselves would have surrendered in masses to regular troops, and every Christian peasant, far and near, would have hurried to bring help to the national uniform. I do not say that the insurgents have behaved at all badly, *quoad* irregular troops. They have been far more merciful to the Turks than these latter have been to them, and are not, like their opponents, stained with the blood of helpless women and children. But no irregular troops can inspire the confidence which regulars would naturally obtain, and every step towards strict discipline is a step towards making success more easy and possible.

The political part of the insurrection has been carefully arranged, and that is a good thing, for if Europe should seek to pacify the disturbed provinces, as she certainly will, unless the Conference is to be a sham, there will be responsible people with whom to deal, who will represent the insurgents. In the steamer in which I travelled yesterday, I met two members of the Provisional Government established in the Pelion district, and they explained to me what efforts had been made to bring all matters of civil administration into

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a regular and legal form. Everything was to be done in the name and by the authority of the Provisional Government, and no excesses or disorders were to be permitted. These two Thessalians had got through the Turkish blockade in a boat to the island of Skiattio, and had there taken ship for the mainland of Greece.

On my way to Chalcis I had the opportunity of again visiting Lamia, where the headquarters of General Soutzo are still established. I found the Greek army just as impatient of its enforced inaction, and just as steady in its mechanical discipline, as when I passed through the town in the latter part of February. The various accounts which have circulated in regard to the unsatisfactory state of the army scarcely deserve to be contradicted, they are such utter nonsense. The army is in capital condition, and could take the field to-morrow with every chance of success against any foe of its own strength—or a little stronger, my more enthusiastic Greek friends would be sure to add.

But though quite efficient as a fighting machine, General Soutzo's force is in somewhat low spirits, because of the retreat from Thessaly. This is what is meant by its discouragement, and the like, of which we occasionally hear. The wonder is, as I said in a former letter, that discipline was so well maintained under the strain of the retreat, and my object in recurring to the matter at present is to say that there have been surprisingly few desertions to the insurgent camp. From what I had heard before going north, I had supposed that a wholesale flight from the regulars to the irregulars had occurred, and that scores of King George's soldiers had gone secretly into the neighbouring province. This, however, is not so. A few men have deserted, but so few that their presence with the insurgents does not form even a minor feature of the struggle. The Greeks cannot be praised for maintaining a very strict or benevolent neutrality towards Turkey just now. That much their friends must admit. But the regular army has stuck very creditably to its colours, with immense temptation to slip off and join the fight raging so close at hand.

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The subsequent history of the Greek rising belongs to a period beyond the limits of the present volume. Up to the present time, however, no event of primary importance has marked the progress of the struggle. The most interesting fact in connection with the affairs of the Hellenic Kingdom is the recent suggestion of Lord Derby that Greece should be represented at the Congress proposed to be held in Berlin for the consideration of the clauses of the Peace Preliminaries.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SIGNING OF THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.

Removal of General Ignatieff and the Russian Diplomatic Chancery to San Stefano.—Fall of Server Pacha.—Results of the Appearance of the English Fleet in the Sea of Marmora.—Tediousness of the Negotiations.—Delay of the Turks.—Refusal of Mukhtar Pacha to abandon the Line of Kujuk Tchekmejeh.—An Exciting Moment.—Peremptory Summons of the Grand Duke.—Skobeleff's Opinion on the Situation.—Mukhtar Pacha Yields.—Description of San Stefano.—The Terms of Peace.—The Question of the Straits.—Industrious Circulation of False Reports.—Turkish Vacillation.—Sabdoullah Bey.—General Ignatieff losing Patience.—An Ultimatum.—The Strip of Territory in Bessarabia.—Misunderstanding between Russia and Roumania.—Sinister Rumours.—Standing on a Volcano—The House by the Seaside.—The Labours of the Russian Secretaries.—The Treaty signed.—The Grand Duke announces the Fact to the Army.—Enthusiasm of the Troops.—The Two Armies Face to Face.—Review by the Grand Duke.—A Solemn Service.—Imposing Scene.—The End of the War.

THE letters comprised in the present chapter describe the closing scenes of the history of the war between Russia and Turkey. They explain the circumstances under which the Russian headquarters were suddenly and unexpectedly removed to San Stefano upon the Sea of Marmora, about twelve miles only from Constantinople, where the peace preliminaries were finally signed; they also indicate the causes of the delay which

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were so long enveloped in mystery, and were so fruitful a cause of distrust and apprehension with regard to the intentions of the Russian commanders.

† San Stefano, *February 26th.*—There has been a great change in the situation since a week ago. Then, to all appearance, Russia had not decided to accept the provocation offered her by the British fleet coming here. The Russian troops were still in the positions assigned to them in the armistice when I passed through Tchataldja on Tuesday last. There was no movement among the troops of Skobeleff's corps, or anywhere else on the line. Upon arriving at Adrianople on Wednesday I heard no talk of the speedy removal of headquarters, but on Thursday there was a change. General Gourko suddenly left Adrianople, his staff receiving only two hours' notice of his departure. On Friday morning it was known that the whole of the headquarters' staff, General Ignatieff, and the Diplomatic Chancery, were to start next day for San Stefano, and there was a forward movement of the Russian troops.

This sudden change of plans was coincident with the news of the fall of Server Pacha; and it was this which seems to have decided the movement, although it had evidently been in contemplation before, as an answer to the coming of the British fleet. I had thought that Russia would not accept the provocation because, after all, it was a very harmless one. Russia has judged otherwise. The coming of the fleet was the first step in the slippery descent which leads to war; the coming of the Russians to San Stefano the second. Both moves were equally unwise and unnecessary. Now it only remains for the fleet to come to the Bosphorus, the answer to which will be a Russian army occupying the heights of Buyukdere, when the forces of England and Russia will be within gunshot of each other. If the fleet moves again nearer Constantinople, the situation will become most dangerous, and war can hardly be avoided.

The fact is, General Ignatieff is very glad of a good pretext for getting nearer Constantinople. The negotiations had been going on slowly, although Safvet Pacha was supposed to have

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full powers to treat. He, in fact, continually refused to accept point after point without orders from Constantinople, and telegraphic communication was constantly mysteriously interrupted. He was three or four days getting an answer. It was the same with the telegrams to General Ignatieff. They were four or five days *en route*. General Ignatieff here received telegrams sent to Adrianople four days before.

Then Safvet Pacha was taken ill, and it was with the greatest difficulty General Ignatieff could get him to go on with the work. He wanted from the first to await the arrival of Sabdoullah Bey from Berlin. He had completely forgotten the whole programme of the Conference last winter, and had to be continually referred to it. Again, he did not know the lines of delimitation agreed upon in the Armistice, and had no map. He had to accept whatever the Russians told him on this head. One day he complained to General Ignatieff of the depredations of the Circassians in some village south of Sofia, and asked if the Russians could not stop it. General Ignatieff showed him that this village was on the Turkish side of the neutral ground, and therefore it was the business of the Turks to keep order, but offered to send Russian troops there if he wished to punish the Circassians. Under such circumstances it was most difficult to push the negotiations rapidly. General Ignatieff said the end of it would be that he would have to deliver an ultimatum in order to get peace signed.

It is impossible to say whether these delays were caused by the natural and ordinary unreadiness of the Turks, or by a wish to gain time. General Ignatieff thinks that the knowledge of the Conference had much to do with it. They think the peace signed now will not be final and conclusive, and this makes them hesitate. Then came news of the fall of Server Pacha, and Safvet said that the negotiations must be suspended until further orders.

This was the last straw on the camel's back. It was immediately decided to go to San Stefano, the consent of the Turks to that step having been previously obtained. The Turks agreed to abandon the last line of defence, Kujuk Chekmejeh; but if the fleet had not appeared in the Straits,

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General Ignatieff would have undoubtedly been obliged to find some other solution of the difficulty. That gave him the very pretext he wanted.

I left Adrianople on Saturday morning with the headquarters' staff. It was a beautiful day. Everybody was in the best spirits, delighted at the exchange of the muddy streets of Adrianople for the pretty village of San Stefano, on the shores of the Sea of Marmora.

Our gaiety seemed almost misplaced, considering the gravity of the step we were taking. We arrived at Tchataldja about six in the evening. Here General Skobeleff's corps and part of the Guards were drawn up to receive the Grand Duke. He reviewed them, and found the troops, having had a rest, in excellent condition; but when on the point of continuing the journey, he was accosted by Tahir Bey, the Turkish officer appointed for regulating the lines of delimitation, who for some days had been at Skobeleff's headquarters. Tahir said that Mukhtar Pacha had no orders to withdraw his troops from Kujuk Chekmejeh. He could not, therefore, allow the Russian troops to occupy these positions, nor to go to San Stefano.

This was news indeed, and of the most serious nature. The Turks were refusing to do what they had agreed upon, and were stopping the Grand Duke after allowing him to come as far as Tchataldja. Had the Turks held out there could have been only one result—the assault of the Turkish positions next morning at daybreak.

The moment was an exciting one, and for a couple of hours we seemed again on the brink of war. The telegraph was set going, but nothing seemed to come of it, for finally the Grand Duke grew very angry and indignant. He thought he was being trifled with. The spirit of his father rose within him, and as he walked up, his resemblance to the Emperor Nicholas just then was striking, and it was still more evident when he called Tahir Bey, and said to him, with an energy that made the latter tremble,—

"Go, and tell Mukhtar Pacha that when I give an order he must obey it, and at once, or it will be the worse for him. Go."

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There was a dead silence for a moment. Everybody felt the gravity of the situation. Tahir withdrew precipitately, sprang upon a locomotive, and in a moment was flying through the darkness down over the line to Kujuk Chekmejeh as fast as steam could carry him. It was now known by all the officers present that unless the Turks abandoned the positions instantly they would be attacked at daylight. The situation was considered very critical. Peace was trembling in the balance, and yet there is not the slighest desire expressed at headquarters for the continuance of the war under any circumstances whatever.

Mr. Gladstone seems to fear the danger of the army escaping from the control of cooler heads at St. Petersburg. There is not the slightest danger of this. There has not been a move without orders. The aversion of the Grand Duke for the continuation of the war was shown in a somewhat amusing way. While waiting for the result of Tahir's mission, the question of what was going to happen was criticized in an animated manner. The Grand Duke, who was excited and indignant at the situation, asked Skobeleff, it is said, what he thought of it. The latter, with the reckless indifference which characterizes him, replied,

"For my part, Monseigneur, I think we shall have to fight England."

"Oh, but you are a madman," exclaimed the Grand Duke in a half-angry manner, turning from him, and spitting as every Russian peasant spits when anything displeases him. It is the highest expression of displeasure or anger.

Finally, after two hours, news came that the positions were being evacuated by Mukhtar, and that the Russians were marching in. At midnight the train was again in motion, and at two o'clock on Sunday morning the Grand Duke was in San Stefano. The line Kujuk Chekmejeh was abandoned completely by Mukhtar, who is now behind the little creek that empties itself into the Marmora, half-way between San Stefano and Jedi Kuleh.

This is the most tangible result of the coming of the fleet so far.

The Russians are delighted with the pretty little place. San

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Stefano is very clean and bright, after much of Bulgaria. The weather is delicious, and the quay and seashore present a very animated appearance lined with officers in brilliant uniforms, ladies, and the population walking up and down, listening to the music that is played all day long. It is very pleasant to watch the glimmer of the sunshine over the Sea of Marmora, with Mount Olympus in the misty distance. Numerous boats and caiques give animation to the scene close at hand, and picturesque groups of Cossacks bathing their horses are continually seen. General Ignatieff inhabits a pretty villa, whose walls are washed by the waves, and from the windows of which the minarets of Saint Sofia are plainly visible. It is here that peace is to be signed.

As regards the progress of the negotiations, I can only say that General Ignatieff told me just before leaving Adrianople that no point had been touched upon but questions relating to Bulgaria, and that little progress had been made even in the arrangement of the frontiers. I may remark that all accounts of the conditions of peace published in various journals are more or less fantastical, except those given out officially by the Russian general. The outlines are well known, and the details are not yet arranged. It is not true that there are any secret conditions, or any secret treaty. The conditions of peace could not be kept secret, because they are of such a nature as cannot be carried out without being known. As regards the secret treaty, secrecy in diplomacy is one of the things of the past. No diplomatic secret can be kept long. The whole thing would be known a week after it was arranged. Besides, Russia can obtain nothing by a secret treaty which she cannot better obtain without. A moment's reflection will convince everybody of this.

The only question that could be arranged by a secret treaty is the question of the Straits. Now General Ignatieff authorizes me to state again, as I informed you nearly two months ago, that Russia did not wish the existing treaty changed with regard to the Straits, whether by agreement with the Turks or by an European Conference. She prefers to adhere to the Treaty of Paris. The only thing General

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Ignatieff proposes to do is to stipulate with the Turks for the removal of obstructions, and to arrange regulations with the Porte with regard to the passage of merchant ships. Vessels of all nations are to be allowed to pass by night as well as by day, and in time of war as well as peace, and various abuses and restrictions invented by the Turks, but not authorized by the Treaty, are to be abolished; but Russia does not mean to touch any regulation relating to the passage of men-of-war.

This question may therefore be considered settled; and as the Russians do not even yet propose to actually occupy Constantinople, and wish to withdraw their troops as soon as possible, I can see no reasonable cause for war. This is, it is true, leaving little to be done by a European Conference, as it is difficult to see what other questions can come within its province.

† SAN STEFANO, *March 1st.*—A certain portion of the Press seems resolved, with the connivance of the Turks, to publish false or exaggerated versions of the conditions of peace, with the view of exciting public opinion on the subject. Although both sides are pledged to secrecy, the Turks give certain journalists conditions, which the Russians say are false, notably those relating to the fleet, the amount of the war indemnity, and the arrangements for payment. General Ignatieff denies having made any proposals relating to the cession of the fleet as yet, and he has not mentioned any figure for the war indemnity. The negotiations have hitherto turned entirely on the question of Bulgaria, which is the great obstacle in the way of an arrangement. It would appear that once this question is settled, the rest will be easy. General Ignatieff showed the conditions of peace published in the *Levant Herald* yesterday to Safvet Pacha, and said:

"Your friends are very kind. We did not know what sum to fix for the indemnity, but the figures which you publish semi-officially, without any authority from us, must represent the sum which you think you are able to pay. I had not thought of putting the figure so high, but since you mention it I thank you for the hint."

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The Turkish Ambassadors disclaimed all knowledge of the conditions published, said they had not been obtained from them, and begged General Ignatieff not to think of using those figures as bases for discussion. The conduct of the Turks hitherto has been of the most childish character. They continually lament their hard fate in being obliged to make such a peace, and offer foolish and unheard of objections to every condition proposed. When General Ignatieff, to induce Safvet Pacha to hurry the negotiations, told him that the Russian military expenses were now two million roubles daily, and that for every day's delay this sum would have to be added to the war indemnity, he exclaimed :—

"But this sum is enormous! Why do you spend so much on your army? We do not spend a tenth of this sum on ours. You pay your officers too much. Your army is too expensive ; and it is not right we should pay for it."

Then they object to Rasgrad being included in Bulgaria, because it is a Mussulman town, although in the middle of a Christian country. General Ignatieff could only reply :—

"If you will pick up Rasgrad, and carry it bodily out of the country, we shall be glad to get rid of it; but we cannot allow it to remain under Turkish rule as long as it is where it is."

Then they are continually going back to the condition of things before the war. They have the coolness to deny that there were ever any massacres in Bulgaria, and maintain that Edib Effendi's famous report, which Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring called a tissue of falsehoods, is quite correct and truthful. This shows how incorrigible the Turks are. Even, now after all the disasters brought upon themselves, they still cling to the old story, and refuse to see that there was any cause for complaint or any necessity for reform.

If General Ignatieff were contented to go back over the old ground and discuss these questions which have been settled long ago, the peace negotiations might last a year. He is continually obliged to recall them to the subject in hand, and pin them down to it. Since the fall of Server Pacha this disposition to delay the negotiations has been very marked.

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Server Pacha, who is a practical man, was disposed to accept accomplished facts. The present ambassadors are not, and, either through unreadiness or design, are delaying the negotiations as much as possible. Even Sabdoullah Bey, who has arrived from Berlin, and who has the reputation of being an intelligent man, shows himself no better in this respect. He was continually referring to what he did on the Commission at Philippopolis for the trial of Achmet Aga and others, until General Ignatieff told him he ought to be ashamed to remember he had ever been on this Commission which was a shame and a disgrace, and that if he and his Commission had done their duty and punished the murderers the war might have been avoided, and they would not be treating for peace to-day with the Russian army in sight of Constantinople. When asked what he would do if the Turks continued this plan of action much longer, General Ignatieff replied, "Well, we shall end by losing patience."

This probably means that he thinks the discussion has gone on long enough. He will probably state the final conditions of peace in the form of an ultimatum, and give the Porte two or three days in which to accept them under penalty of the Russian army marching into the capital. I may remark that I have every reason to believe that General Ignatieff did something of the kind yesterday, for it was expected the negotiations would take a decisive turn one way or the other. General Ignatieff informed the Turks that although disposed to yield on many questions of details, he must have a positive answer as to whether they meant to accept or not before losing any more time.

The conference closed yesterday at six, and the Turks promised a final answer to-day. There was every probability the answer would be favourable to peace, but the negotiations may still continue for some days. The Turks have proposed that Bulgaria should accept part of the Turkish debt; but General Ignatieff answered that this would necessitate the independence of Bulgaria, as a new province could not be expected to pay tribute and debt both. The tribute will be as much as the Bulgarians can be expected to pay; but if the Turks are willing to grant independence to Bulgaria then

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the Bulgarians would take a share of the debt. The Turkish ambassadors did not accept the idea of independence at all, although as regards all that the tribute is likely to profit them, they might just as well, for this tribute will undoubtedly go towards the payment of the Russian war indemnity.

The misunderstanding between Russia and Roumania seems growing more and more decided regarding the strip of Bessarabian territory. The Emperor scarcely means to give it up, nor could he do so without causing much discontent in Russia. Every Russian looks upon this bit of swamp as Russian, not Roumanian, soil, and wants it back. It has not been long enough in the possession of Roumania for the Russians to have lost this idea. The Roumanians object to relinquishing it because they say the people are Roumanians, and it is a question of race and national existence for them. They aspire to the national unity of all Roumanians. They cannot consent to violate the great principle of their national existence. Their hope that Austria will take sides with them is, however, ill-founded. It is well known that Roumania hopes at some future day to have Transylvania and other Austrian provinces where Roumanian is spoken. It is not likely, therefore, that Austria will encourage Roumanian national aspirations, or care much about a violation of principle. It is a question of principle with the Roumanians, and if only a question of *amour propre* with the Russians the Emperor would do well to be magnanimous.

The following letter, the joint work of two correspondents, who have contributed to this volume narratives of some of the most striking episodes in the war, brings the history of the struggle between Russia and Turkey to a close, with the description of a scene no less picturesque and romantic than important for its historical interest.

+ † CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 5th.*—For several days past the signing of the Treaty of Peace had been momentarily expected, and the public feeling, harassed by the tedious delay

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of the much desired event, became more and more impressionable, as day followed day and reports of the conclusion of peace succeeded rumours of a general European war. The statements of the demands of Russia were followed by stories of suspicious movements of the fleet, and even of the landing of British troops on Turkish ground.

For days it had seemed as if we were standing on a volcano. Large patrols of soldiers paced the streets, confessedly to guard against an expected popular movement, although the quiet was perfect and no disturbance occurred. The hush was almost ominous in its completeness. The smallest hints or rumours spread everywhere like lightning, and the situation was discussed earnestly and in undertones on all sides. Such was the anxiety of the alarmists that their distorted vision made them discover in the white tents of the Turkish army on the distant hills north of the city the camp of the Russians drawing insidiously nearer the city gates. Every steamer to San Stefano was crowded. Every newspaper found impatient readers.

We had been having delightful, spring-like summer weather until Saturday evening, when the clear sky became clouded, and it was evident that a storm was brewing. "Now," said the superstitious, "this sudden change means a change in the peaceful aspect of the political horizon, and to-morrow we shall find ourselves in the new war." But as the storm was gathering that night, the last threatening war clouds dispersed and disappeared, and the bright dawn of peace was near at hand.

In a house by the seaside at San Stefano, shaken by the increasing gale that tore across the Sea of Marmora, were busy, all night long, the secretaries of both diplomatic bodies copying and arranging for the signatures the Treaty of Peace, the result of the now concluded negotiations. All night long Prince Tzereteleff dictated the treaty to his colleague, Chebachoff, who wrote and wrote through the long hours until the document was finished. Although wearied by continuous labour, these two secretaries, appreciating the value of their work, kept at their task, only stopping for refreshment and to listen to the scratch of the reeds of the Turkish secretaries

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in an adjoining room, busy with their own copy, until the dull dawn found them still at the table. Then, the last word being on paper, they slept amid the confusion of documents, maps, and volumes, as a soldier sleeps in his harness.

Scarcely was it daylight when, notwithstanding the storm, there was an unusual movement in the village. There was a general idea that peace was to be signed that day. The steamers from Constantinople came rolling along through the rough sea, overladen with excursionists attracted by the review which had been announced to take place in celebration of the anniversary of the Czar's accession to the throne. Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, and Russians crowded the little village, besieging the restaurants, swarming about the doors of houses whence were supposed to issue some of the great personages who were to become famous in history, all impatiently awaiting the hour of two, the appointed time of the review. The horses of the Grand Duke and his staff were gathered about the entrance to his quarters, and keen-eyed spectators ready to interpret the slightest movement of the Commander-in-Chief formed unbroken ranks around the group of horses in the street.

One o'clock passed. Two o'clock passed, and still no movement. People began to grow serious, began to feel that something was in the air, were sure that this was the decisive moment, that peace and war were trembling in the scale, and one said to the other solemnly, "This is an event in history," and each believed himself an actor in the scene, such was the impressiveness of the hour. At length word was given out that the review was postponed until three o'clock, but that hour came and went, and brought only another postponement for an hour. Later, rain fell, but the people remained at their posts.

At last their patience was rewarded. About four o'clock the Grand Duke mounted, and rode to the Diplomatic Chancery, where he asked at the door. "Is it ready?" and then galloped towards the hill where the army was drawn up. Here we halted again for a few moments, wondering what would happen next. Finally, a carriage came whirling out of the

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village towards us. General Ignatieff was in it, and when he approached he rose and said :—

"I have the honour to congratulate your Highness on the signature of peace."

There was a long loud shout. Then the Grand Duke, followed by about a hundred officers, dashed forward to where the troops were formed on rising ground close by the sea coast, just behind San Stefano lighthouse, and began riding along the lines. As he passed, the soldiers did not know that peace had been signed, as it was still unannounced; but soon the news spread, and the cheering grew louder and more enthusiastic. There were Schouvaloff's and Rauch's divisions, with the sharpshooters of the Guard, and cavalry and artillery in line, and the Grand Duke passed between the ranks in review. Very different, indeed, was the appearance of these soldiers now and that of the same men months ago. During their interval of rest they had patched and cleaned their clothes, repaired and polished their boots, washed and brushed up generally, so that they looked as trim and neat as could be.

After riding between the lines the Grand Duke halted on a little eminence, whence all the troops could be seen, and formally made the announcement of the peace :—

"I have the honour to inform the army that, with the help of God, we have concluded a Treaty of Peace."

Then another shout burst forth from 20,000 throats, rising, swelling, and dying away. There was a general feeling of relief and satisfaction. I must say, however, that the news of peace was not greeted with anything like the wild excitement and enthusiasm caused by the Emperor's proclamation of war at Kischeneff last April. There stood the famous regiment of Peter the Great, the Praobrajensky, often the first to attack in many of the late battles of the war. There were the troops who had faced the enemy on the bleak summits of the Balkans at Araba-Konak for a long, cold, and terrible month. There were the men who had toiled over the slippery mountain paths, scantily fed, thinly dressed, dragging the heavy guns across into the valley, finding, after their struggles with cold, hunger, and fatigue, a despe-

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rate enemy ready to resist them on every hill-top. These were the same brave fellows who had made the long march from Sofia to Philippopolis, who had run that race for enormous stakes with Suleiman's army, and finally thrown their great force against the wall of the Rhodope mountains, and smashed it to pieces. These were the men whose courage, devotion, and unparalleled endurance will go down to history.

And there, gathered scarcely more than a rifle-shot away, was the enemy they had found worthy of their steel. For on the crest of the neighbouring hill stood the Turks in groups, interested spectators of the scene; these very fellows who had kept the snowy ridge of Shandarnik, defending gallantly the great gate of Roumelia, and who at last, after a memorable retreat, had fought like heroes on the hills of Stanimaka. These two armies stood looking at each other at this moment of final peace; like true soldiers they had learned to respect and esteem each other, and welcomed peace as an honourable finish to the fight which they cared not to prolong. It was the beginning of a new friendship formed on the basis of actual experience of qualities that had hitherto been unrecognized.

After the review, gathering his officers about him where the priest stood ready for the *Te Deum*, the Grand Duke spoke briefly and emphatically, saying:—

"To an army which has accomplished what you have, my friends, nothing is impossible."

Then all dismounted, uncovered, and a solemn service was conducted, the soldiers all kneeling. A few ladies were present at this ceremony. Among others I noticed Madame Ignatieff, kneeling on a fur rug beside her carriage.

All the generals except Skobeleff were in attendance. He was back in Tchataldja. Baron Loenhausen and Captain Bolla, the Austrian Military Attachés, the former wearing the Cross of St. Vladimir, received for coolness under fire, the latter with the St. George, for acting as Skobeleff's aide-de-camp, on the day he took the redoubts on the Loftcha road; Colonel Gaillard, the French Attaché, who has been with the Grand Duke ever since the army was mobilized, eighteen months ago, decorated with the St. Vladimir around his neck; Major Leignitz, the Prussian Attaché, with the St. George, for

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services at the Grivica redoubt; Lieutenant Green, the American Attaché, wearing the St. Vladimir for the last Balkan campaign; and, finally, the two Swiss Attachés, who had arrived just in time for the *Te Deum*. These officers, with a few correspondents who had followed the army, were the foreign witnesses of the closing scene. Of the correspondents who, eighty strong, joined the headquarters at Ploesti, only five now remain with the army.

Never has a peace been celebrated under more dramatic and picturesque conditions, or with more impressive surroundings. The two armies face to face, the clearing storm, the waning light of day, the rush of the wind, and the near wash of the wave mingling with the chant of the priests and the responses of the soldiers and the roar of the Sea of Marmora swelling and falling. The landscape, always of great beauty, now formed a wonderfully appropriate background to the picture. Across the fretting chafing waters of the sea, the dome and slender minarets of St. Sofia came up sharply against the sky, the dominant points in the interesting silhouette of distant Stamboul. Away to the south, the Prince's Islands rose like great mounds, dark and massive, against the distant Asiatic shore, and behind them we knew was hidden the English fleet. Above and far beyond, the white peak of Mount Olympus unveiled for the moment its majestic summit as the rays of the ruddy sunset were reflected from the snow-covered flanks.

The religious ceremony over, the Grand Duke took his stand, and the army began to file past with a swinging rapid stride, in forcible contrast with the weary pace with which they used to drag themselves slowly along at the end of that long and exhausting chase, scarcely at times able to put one foot before the other. The night was falling, and darkness settled quickly over the scene. When we left the spot the Grand Duke was still sitting immovable on his horse, and the troops were still passing. As we rode down into the village, we could hear the joyful shouts still ringing in the air, and the measured tramp, tramp going off in the darkness.

So ends the war of 1877–78.

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APPENDIX.

THE text of the Preliminaries of Peace was telegraphed *in extenso* from St. Petersburgh by the Correspondent of the *Daily News*, and was published in that journal on the morning following the date of its appearance in the Russian official organ. Subjoined is a complete translation :—

PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.

His Majesty the Emperor of Russia and his Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, inspired with the wish of restoring and securing the blessings of peace to their countries and people, as well as of preventing any fresh complication which might imperil the same, have named as their plenipotentiaries, with a view to draw up, conclude, and sign the Preliminaries of Peace :—

His Majesty the Emperor of Russia on the one side, the Count Nicholas Ignatiew, Aide-de-Camp General of his Imperial Majesty, Lieutenant-General, Member of the Council of the Empire, decorated with the Order of St. Alexander Newsky in diamonds, and with various other Russian and foreign Orders, and Sieur Alexander Nelidow, Chamberlain of the Imperial Court, Conseiller d'Etat actuel, decorated with the Order of St. Anne of the first class, with swords, and with various other Russian and foreign Orders ;

And His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans on the other side, Safvet Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs, decorated with the Order of the Osmanié in brilliants, with that of the Medjidié of the first class, and with various foreign Orders, and Sadoullah Bey, His Majesty's Ambassador at the Imperial Court of Germany, decorated with the Order of the Medjidié of the first class, with that of the Osmanié of the second class, and with various other foreign Orders ;

Who, after having exchanged their full powers, which were found to be in good and proper form, have agreed to the following Articles :—

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ARTICLE I.

In order to put an end to the perpetual conflicts between Turkey and Montenegro, the frontier which separates the two countries will be rectified conformably to the map hereto annexed, subject to the reserve hereinafter mentioned, in the following manner :—

From the mountain of Dobrostitza the frontier will follow the line indicated by the Conference of Constantinople as far as Korito by Bilek. Thence the new frontier will run to Gatzko (Metochia-Gatzko will belong to Montenegro), and towards the confluence of the Piva and the Tara, ascending towards the north by the Drina as far as its confluence with the Lim. The eastern frontier of the Principality will follow this last river as far as Prijepolje, and will proceed by Roshaj to Sukha-Planina (leaving Bihor and Roshaj to Montenegro). Taking in Bugovo, Plava, and Gusinje, the frontier line will follow the chain of mountains by Shlieb, Paklen, and along the northern frontier of Albania by the crests of the Mountains Koprivnik, Babavik, Bor-vik, to the highest peak of Prokleti. From that point the frontier will proceed by the summit of Biskaschik, and will run in a straight line to the Lake of Tjiceni-hoti. Dividing Tjiceni-hoti and Tjiceni-kastrati, it will cross the Lake of Scutari to the Boyana, the thalweg of which it will follow as far as the sea. Nichsich, Gatzko, Spouje, Podgoritza, Jabliak, and Antivari will remain to Montenegro.

A European Commission, on which the Sublime Porte and the Government of Montenegro shall be represented, will be charged with fixing the definite limits of the Principality, making on the spot such modifications in the general tracing as it may think necessary and equitable, from the point of view of the respective interests and tranquillity of the two countries, to which it will accord in this respect the equivalents deemed necessary.

The navigation of the Boyana having always giving rise to disputes between the Sublime Porte and Montenegro, will be the subject of a special regulation, which will be prepared by the same European Commmission.

ARTICLE II.

The Sublime Porte recognizes definitively the independence of the Principality of Montenegro.

An understanding between the Imperial Government of Russia, the Ottoman Government, and the Principality of

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Montenegro will determine subsequently the character and form of the relations between the Sublime Porte and the Principality as regards particularly the establishment of Montenegrin Agents at Constantinople, and in certain localities of the Ottoman Empire, where the necessity for such Agents shall be recognized, the extradition of fugitive criminals on the one territory or the other, and the subjection of Montenegrins travelling or sojourning in the Ottoman Empire to the Ottoman laws and authorities, according to the principles of international law and the established usages concerning the Montenegrins.

A Convention will be concluded between the Sublime Porte and Montenegro to regulate the questions connected with the relations between the inhabitants of the confines of the two countries and with the military works on the same confines. The points upon which an understanding cannot be established will be settled by the arbitration of Russia and Austria-Hungary.

Henceforward, if there is any discussion or conflict, except as regards new territorial demands, Turkey and Montenegro will leave the settlement of their differences to Russia and Austria-Hungary, who will arbitrate in common.

The troops of Montenegro will be bound to evacuate the territory not comprised within the limits indicated above within ten days from the signature of the Preliminaries of Peace.

Article III.

Servia is recognized as independent. Its frontier, marked on the annexed map, will follow the thalweg of the Drina, leaving Little Zwornik and Zakar to the Principality, and following the old limit as far as the sources of the stream Dezevo, near Stoilac. Thence the new line will follow the course of that stream as far as the River Raska, and then the course of the latter as far as Novi-Bazar.

From Novi-Bazar, ascending the stream which passes near the villages of Mekinje and Irgoviste as far as its source, the frontier line will run by Bosur Planina, in the valley of the Ibar, and will then descend the stream which falls into this river near the village of Ribanic.

The line will then follow the course of the Rivers Ibar, Sitnitza, and Lab, and of the brook Batintze to its source (upon the Grapachnitza Planina). Thence the frontier will follow the heights which separate the waters of the Kriva and the Veternitza, and will meet the latter river by the shortest route

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at the mouth of the stream Miovatzka, which it will ascend, crossing the Miovatzka Planina and redescending towards the Morava, near the village of Kalimanci.

From this point the frontier will descend the Morava as far as the River Vlossina, near the village of Staïkovtzi. Reascending the latter river, as well as the Linberazda, and the brook Koukavitze, the line will pass by the Sukha Planina, will run along the stream Vrylo as far as the Nisawa, and will descend the said river as far as the village of Kronpatz, whence the line will rejoin by the shortest route the old Servian frontier to the south-east of Karaoul Baré, and will not leave it until it reaches the Danube.

Ada-Kale will be evacuated and razed.

A Turco-Servian Commission, assisted by a Russian Commissioner, will, within three months, arrange upon the spot the definite frontier line, and will definitively settle the questions relating to the islands of the Drina. A Bulgarian delegate will be admitted to participate in the work of the Commission when it shall be engaged on the frontier between Servia and Bulgaria.

ARTICLE IV.

The Mussulmans holding lands in the teritories annexed to Servia, and who wish to reside out of the Principality, can preserve their real property by having them farmed out or administered by others. A Turco-Servian Commission, assisted by a Russian Commissioner, will be charged to decide absolutely, in the course of two years, all questions relating to the verification of real estate in which Mussulman interests are concerned.

This Commission will also be called upon to settle within three years the method of alienation of State property and of religious endowments (vacouf), as well as the questions relative to the interests of private persons which may be involved. Until a direct Treaty is concluded between Turkey and Servia determining the character of the relations between the Sublime Porte and the Principality, Servian subjects travelling or sojourning in the Ottoman Empire shall be treated according to the general principles of international law.

The Servian troops shall be bound to evacuate the territory not comprised within the above-mentioned limits within fifteen days from the signature of the Preliminaries of Peace.

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ARTICLE V.

The Sublime Porte recognizes the independence of Roumania, which will establish its right to an indemnity, to be discussed between the two countries.

Until the conclusion of a direct Treaty between Turkey and Roumania, Roumanian subjects will enjoy in Turkey all the rights guaranteed to the subjects of other European Powers.

ARTICLE VI.

Bulgaria is constituted an autonomous tributary Principality, with a Christian Government and a national militia.

The definitive frontiers of the Bulgarian Principality will be traced by a special Russo-Turkish Commission before the evacuation of Roumelia by the Imperial Russian army.

This Commission will, in working out the modifications to be made on the spot in the general tracing, take into account the principle of the nationality of the majority of the inhabitants of the border districts, conformably to the Bases of Peace, and also the topographical necessities and practical interests of the intercommunication of the local population.

The extent of the Bulgarian Principality is laid down in general terms on the accompanying map, which will serve as a basis for the definitive fixing of the limits. Leaving the new frontier of the Servian Principality, the line will follow the western limit of the Caza of Wrania as far as the chain of the Kara-dagh. Turning towards the west, the line will follow the western limits of the Cazas of Koumanovo, Kotchani, Kalkandelen, to Mount Korab; thence by the River Welestchitza as far as its junction with the black Drina. Turning towards the south by the Drina and afterwards by the western limit of the Caza of Ochride towards Mount Linas, the frontier will follow the western limits of the Cazas of Gortcha and Starovo as far as Mount Grammos. Then by the Lake of Kastoria, the frontier line will rejoin the River Moglenitza, and after having followed its course, and passed to the south of Yanitza (Wardar Yenidje), will go by the mouth of the Warder and by the Galliko towards the villages of Parga and of Saraï-keui; thence through the middle of Lake Bechik-Guel to the mouth of the Rivers Strouma and Karassou, and by the sea-coast as as far as Buru-Guel; thence striking north-west towards Mount Tchaltepe by the chain of Rhodope as far as Mount Krouschowo, by the Black Balkans (Kara-Balkan), by the mountains Eschek-koulatchi, Tchepelion, Karakolas, and Tschiklar, as far as the River Arda.

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Thence the line will be traced in the direction of the town of Tchirmen, and leaving the town of Adrianople to the south, by the villages of Sugutlion, Kara-Hamza, Arnaout-keui, Akardji, and Enidje as far as the River Tekederessi. Following the Rivers Tekederessi and Tchorlouderessi as far as Loule-Bourgaz, and thence, by the River Soudjak-dere as far as the village of Serguen, the frontier line will go by the heights straight towards Hakim-tabiassi, where it will strike the Black Sea. It will leave the sea-coast near Mangalia, following the southern boundaries of the Sandjak of Toultcha, and will come out on the Danube above Rassova.

Article VII.

The Prince of Bulgaria shall be freely elected by the population and confirmed by the Sublime Porte, with the assent of the Powers. No member of the reigning dynasties of the great European Powers shall be capable of being elected Prince of Bulgaria.

In the event of the dignity of Prince of Bulgaria being vacant, the election of the new Prince shall be made subject to the same conditions and forms.

Before the election of the Prince, an Assembly of Bulgarian Notables, to be convoked at Philippopolis (Plowdiw) or Tyrnowo, shall draw up, under the superintendence of an Imperial Russian Commissioner, and in the presence of an Ottoman Commissioner, the organization of the future administration, in conformity with the precedents established in 1830 after the Peace of Adrianople, in the Danubian Principalities.

In the localities where Bulgarians are mixed with Turks, Greeks, Wallachians (Koutzo-Vlachs), or others, proper account is to be taken of the rights and interests of these populations in the elections and in the preparation of the Organic Laws.

The introduction of the new system into Bulgaria, and the superintendence of its working, will be entrusted for two years to an Imperial Russian Commissioner. At the expiration of the first year after the introduction of the new system, and if an understanding on this subject has been established between Russia, the Sublime Porte, and the Cabinets of Europe, they can, if it is deemed necessary, associate Special Delegates with the Imperial Russian Commissioner.

Article VIII.

The Ottoman army will no longer remain in Bulgaria, and all the ancient fortresses will be razed at the expense of the local

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Government. The Sublime Porte will have the right to dispose, as it sees fit, of the war material and of the other property belonging to the Ottoman Government which may have been left in the Danubian fortresses already evacuated in accordance with the terms of the Armistice of the $\frac{19th}{31st}$ January, as well as of that in the strongholds of Schoumla and Varna.

Until the complete formation of a native militia sufficient to preserve order, security, and tranquillity, and the strength of which will be fixed later on by an understanding between the Ottoman Government and the Imperial Russian Cabinet, Russian troops will occupy the country, and will give armed assistance to the Commissioner in case of need. This occupation will also be limited to a term approximating to two years.

The strength of the Russian army of occupation, to be composed of six divisions of infantry and two of cavalry, which will remain in Bulgaria after the evacuation of Turkey by the Imperial army, shall not exceed 50,000 men. It will be maintained at the expense of the country occupied. The Russian troops of occupation in Bulgaria will maintain their communications with Russia, not only through Roumania, but also by the ports of the Black Sea, Varna and Bourgas, where they may organize, for the term of the occupation, the necessary depôts.

ARTICLE IX.

The amount of the annual tribute which Bulgaria is to pay the Suzerain Court, by transmitting it to a bank to be hereafter named by the Sublime Porte, will be determined by an agreement between Russia, the Ottoman Government, and the other Cabinets, at the end of the first year during which the new organization shall be in operation. This tribute will be calculated on the average revenue of all the territory which is to form part of the Principality.

Bulgaria will take upon itself the obligations of the Imperial Ottoman Government towards the Rustchuk and Varna Railway Company, after an agreement has been come to between the Sublime Porte, the Government of the Principality, and the Directors of this Company. The regulations as to the other railways (*voies ferrées*) which cross the Principality are also reserved for an agreement between the Sublime Porte, the Government established in Bulgaria, and the Directors of the Companies concerned.

ARTICLE X.

The Sublime Porte shall have the right to make use of Bulgaria for the transport by fixed routes of its troops,

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munitions, and provisions to the provinces beyond the Principality, and *vice versâ*. In order to avoid difficulties and misunderstandings in the application of this right, while guaranteeing the military necessities of the Sublime Porte, a special regulation will lay down the conditions of it within three months after the ratification of the present Act by an understanding between the Sublime Porte and the Bulgarian Government.

It is fully understood that this right is limited to the regular Ottoman troops, and that the irregulars, the Bashi-Bazouks, and the Circassians will be absolutely excluded from it.

The Sublime Porte also reserves to itself the right of sending its postal service through the Principality, and of maintaining telegraphic communication. These two points shall also be determined in the manner and within the period of time indicated above.

ARTICLE XI.

The Mussulman proprietors or others who fix their personal residence outside the Principality may retain their estates by having them farmed or administered by others. Turco-Bulgarian Commissions shall sit in the principal centres of population, under the superintendence of Russian Commissioners, to decide absolutely in the course of two years all questions relative to the verification of real property in which either Mussulmans or others may be interested.

Similar Commissions will be charged with the duty of regulating within two years all questions relative to the mode of alienation, working, or use for the benefit of the Sublime Porte of the property of the State, and of the religious endowments (*Vacouf*).

At the expiration of the two years mentioned above all properties which shall not have been claimed shall be sold by public auction, and the proceeds thereof shall be devoted to the support of the widows and orphans, Mussulman as well as Christian, victims of the recent events.

ARTICLE XII.

All the Danubian fortresses shall be razed. There shall be no strongholds in future on the banks of this river, nor any men-of-war in the waters of the Principalities of Roumania, Servia, and Bulgaria, except the usual *stationnaires* and the small vessels intended for river-police and custom-house purposes.

The rights, obligations, and prerogatives of the International Commission of the Lower Danube are maintained intact.

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ARTICLE XIII.

The Sublime Porte undertakes to render the passage of Soulina again navigable, and to indemnify the private individuals who have suffered loss by the war and the interruption of the navigation of the Danube; applying for this double charge a sum of 500,000 francs from the amount due to the Sublime Porte from the Danubian Commission.

ARTICLE XIV.

The European proposals communicated to the Ottoman Plenipotentiaries at the first sitting of the Constantinople Conference shall immediately be introduced into Bosnia and Herzegovina, with any modifications which may be agreed upon in common between the Sublime Porte, the Government of Russia, and that of Austria-Hungary.

The payment of arrears of taxes shall not be required, and the current revenues of these provinces until the 1st of March, 1880, shall be exclusively applied to indemnify the families of refugees and inhabitants, victims of recent events, without distinction of race or creed, as well as to the local needs of the country. The sum to be received annually after this period by the Central Government shall be subsequently fixed by a special understanding between Turkey, Russia, and Austria-Hungary.

ARTICLE XV.

The Sublime Porte engages to apply scrupulously in the Island of Crete the Organic Law of 1868, taking into account the previously expressed wishes of the native population.

An analogous law adapted to local requirements shall likewise be introduced into Epirus, Thessaly, and the other parts of Turkey in Europe, for which a special constitution is not provided by the present Act.

Special Commissions, in which the native population will be largely represented, shall in each province be entrusted with the task of elaborating the details of the new organization, and the result of their labours shall be submitted to the Sublime Porte, who will consult the Imperial Government of Russia before carrying it into effect.

ARTICLE XVI.

As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the

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maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians.

ARTICLE XVII.

A full and complete amnesty is granted by the Sublime Porte to all Ottoman subjects compromised by recent events, and all persons imprisoned on this account or sent into exile shall be immediately set at liberty.

ARTICLE XVIII.

The Sublime Porte will take into serious consideration the opinion expressed by the Commissioners of the Mediating Powers as regards the possession of the town of Khotour, and engages to have the works of the definitive delimitation of the Turco-Persian Boundary carried into effect.

ARTICLE XIX.

The war indemnities and the losses imposed on Russia which His Majesty the Emperor of Russia claims, and which the Sublime Porte has bound itself to reimburse to him, consist of—

(*a.*) 900,000,000 roubles for war expenses (maintenance of the army, replacing of war material, and war contracts).

(*b.*) 400,000,000 roubles on account of damage done to the south coast of Russia, to her export commerce, to her industries, and to her railways.

(*c.*) 100,000,000 roubles for injuries inflicted on the Caucasus by the invasion; and,

(*d.*) 10,000,000 roubles for costs and damages of Russian subjects and establishments in Turkey.

Total 1,410,000,000 roubles.

Taking into consideration the financial embarrassments of Turkey, and in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty the Sultan, the Emperor of Russia consents to substitute for the payment of the greater part of the moneys enumerated in the above paragraph, the following territorial cessions:—

(*a.*) The Sandjak of Toultcha, that is to say, the districts (Cazas) of Kilia, Soulina, Mahmoudié, Isaktcha, Toultcha, Matchine, Babadagh, Hirsowo, Kustendje, and Medjidie, as well as the Delta Islands and the Isle of Serpents.

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Not wishing, however, to annex this territory and the Delta Islands, Russia reserves the right of exchanging them for the part of Bessarabia detached from her by the Treaty of 1856, and which is bounded on the south by the thalweg of the Kilia branch and the mouth of the Stary-Stamboul.

The question of the apportionment of waters and fisheries shall be determined by a Russo-Roumanian Commission within a year after the ratification of the Treaty of Peace.

(*b.*) Ardahan, Kars, Batoum, Bayazet, and the territory as far as the Saganlough.

In its general outline, the frontier line, leaving the Black Sea coast, will follow the crest of the mountains which separate the affluents of the River Hopa from those of the River Tcharokh, and the chain of the mountains to the south of the town of Artwin up the river Tcharokh, near the villages of Alat and Bechaget; then the frontier will pass by the peaks of Mounts Dervenikghek, Hortchezor, and Bedjiguin-Dagh, by the crest which separates the affluents of the Rivers Tortoum-tchaï and the Tcharokh by the heights near Zaily-Vihine, coming down at the village Vihine-Kilissa to the River Tortoum-tchaï; thence it will follow the Sivridagh chain to the pass (*col*) of the same name, passing south of the village of Noriman; then it will turn to the south-east and go to Zivine, whence the frontier, passing west of the road which leads from Zivine to the villages of Ardost and Horassan, will turn south by the Saganlough chain to the village of Gilitchman; then by the crest of the Charian-Dagh it will arrive, ten versts south of Hamour, at the Mourad-tchai defile; then the line will follow the crest of the Alla-Dagh and the summits of the Hori and Tandourek, and passing south of the Bayazet valley, will proceed to rejoin the old Turko-Persian frontier to the south of the lake of Kazli-gueul.

The definitive limits of the territory annexed to Russia, and indicated on the map hereto appended, will be fixed by a Commission composed of Russian and Ottoman delegates.

This Commission in its labours will take into account the topography of localities, as well as considerations of good administration and other conditions calculated to insure the tranquillity of the country.

(*c.*) The territories mentioned in paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) are ceded to Russia as an equivalent for the sum of one milliard and one hundred million roubles. As for the rest of the indemnity, apart from the 10,000,000 of roubles intended to indemnify Russian interests and establishments in Turkey, namely, 300,000,000 of roubles—the mode of payment and guarantee of

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that sum shall be settled by an understanding between the Imperial Government of Russia and that of his Majesty the Sultan.

(*d.*) The 10,000,000 roubles claimed as indemnity for the Russian subjects and establishments in Turkey shall be paid as soon as the claims of those interested are examined by the Russian Embassy at Constantinople and handed to the Sublime Porte.

ARTICLE XX.

The Sublime Porte will take effective steps to put an amicable end to the lawsuits of Russian subjects pending for several years, to indemnify the latter if need be, and to carry into effect without delay all judgments passed.

ARTICLE XXI.

The inhabitants of the districts ceded to Russia who wish to take up their residence out of these territories will be free to retire on selling all their real property. For this purpose an interval of three years is granted them, counting from the date of ratification of the present Act.

On the expiration of that time those of the inhabitants who shall not have sold their real property and left the country shall remain Russian subjects.

Real property belonging to the State, or to religious establishments situated out of the localities aforesaid, shall be sold within the same interval of three years as shall be arranged by a special Russo-Turkish Commission. The same Commission shall be intrusted with determining how the Ottoman Government is to remove its war material, munitions, supplies, and other State property actually in the forts, towns, and localities ceded to Russia, and not at present occupied by Russian troops.

ARTICLE XXII.

Russian ecclesiastics, pilgrims, and monks travelling or sojourning in Turkey in Europe or in Asia shall enjoy the same rights, advantages, and privileges as the foreign ecclesiastics of any other nationality.

The right of official protection by the Imperial Embassy and Russian Consulates in Turkey is recognized, both as regards the persons above-mentioned, and their possessions, religious houses, charitable institutions, &c., in the Holy Places and elsewhere.

The monks of Mount Athos, of Russian origin, shall be maintained in all their possessions and former privileges, and

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shall continue to enjoy in the three convents belonging to them and in the adjoining buildings the same rights and privileges as are assured to the other religious establishments and convents of Mount Athos.

ARTICLE XXIII.

All the Treaties, Conventions, and agreements previously concluded between the two High Contracting Parties relative to commerce, jurisdiction, and the position of Russian subjects in Turkey, and which had been abrogated by the state of war, shall come into force again, with the exception of the clauses affected by the present Act. The two Governments will be placed again in the same relation to one another, with respect to all their engagements and commercial and other relations, as they were in before the declaration of war.

ARTICLE XXIV.

The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles shall remain open in time of war as in time of peace to the merchant-vessels of neutral States arriving from or bound to Russian ports. The Sublime Porte consequently engages never henceforth to establish at the ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, a fictitious blockade (*blocus fictif*), at variance with the spirit of the Declaration signed at Paris on the $\frac{4}{16}$th of April, 1856.

ARTICLE XXV.

The complete evacuation of Turkey in Europe, with the exception of Bulgaria, by the Russian army will take place within three months after the conclusion of the definitive peace between His Majesty the Emperor of Russia and His Majesty the Sultan.

In order to save time, and to avoid the cost of the prolonged maintenance of the Russian troops in Turkey and Roumania, part of the Imperial army may proceed to the ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora, to be there shipped in vessels belonging to the Russian Government or chartered for the occasion.

The evacuation of Turkey in Asia will be effected within the space of six months, dating from the conclusion of the definitive peace, and the Russian troops will be entitled to take ship at Trebizond in order to return by the Caucasus or the Crimea.

The operations of the evacuation will begin immediately after the exchange of ratifications.

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ARTICLE XXVI.

As long as the Imperial Russian troops remain in the localities which, in conformity with the present Act, will be restored to the Sublime Porte, the administration and order of affairs will continue in the same state as has existed since the occupation. The Sublime Porte will not participate therein during all that time, nor until the entire departure of all the troops.

The Ottoman forces shall not enter the places to be restored to the Sublime Porte, and the Sublime Porte cannot begin to exercise its authority there, until notice of each fortress and province having been evacuated by the Russian troops shall have been given by the Commander of these troops to the officer appointed for this purpose by the Sublime Porte.

ARTICLE XXVII.

The Sublime Porte undertakes not to punish in any manner, or allow to be punished, those Ottoman subjects who may have been compromised by their relations with the Russian army during the war. In the event of any persons wishing to withdraw with their families when the Russian troops leave, the Ottoman authorities shall not oppose their departure.

ARTICLE XXVIII.

Immediately upon the ratification of the Preliminaries of Peace, the prisoners of war shall be reciprocally restored under the care of special Commissioners appointed on both sides, who for this purpose shall go to Odessa and Sebastopol. The Ottoman Government will pay all the expenses of the maintenance of the prisoners that are returned to them, in eighteen equal instalments in the space of six years, in accordance with the accounts that will be drawn up by the above-mentioned Commissioners.

The exchange of prisoners between the Ottoman Government and the Governments of Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro will be made on the same bases, deducting, however, in the account, the number of prisoners restored by the Ottoman Government from the number of prisoners that will have to be restored to that Government.

ARTICLE XXIX.

The present Act shall be ratified by their Imperial Majesties the Emperor of Russia and the Emperor of the Ottomans, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in fifteen days, or sooner if

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possible, at St. Petersburgh, where likewise an agreement shall be come to as to the place and the time at which the stipulations of the present Act shall be invested with all the solemn forms usually observed in Treaties of Peace. It is, however, well understood that the High Contracting Parties consider themselves as formally bound by the present Act from the moment of its ratification.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have appended their signatures and seals to the present Act.

Done at San Stefano, the $\frac{\text{nineteenth February}}{\text{third March}}$, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight.

(Signed)	Cte. N. IGNATIEW.	(Signed)	SAFVET.
	NELIDOW.		SADOULLAH.

Final paragraph of Article XI. of the Act of the Preliminaries of Peace signed this day, $\frac{\text{February 19}}{\text{March 3,}}$ 1878, which was omitted, and which should form an integral part of the said Article:—

The inhabitants of the Principality of Bulgaria when travelling or sojourning in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire shall be subject to the Ottoman laws and authorities.

(Signed)	Cte. N. IGNATIEW.	(Signed)	SAFVET.
	NELIDOW.		SADOULLAH.

San Stefano, $\frac{\text{February 19}}{\text{March 3,}}$ 1878.

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